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REV SYLVESTER LARNED.

New York Wiley & Putnam 161 Broadway 1844.

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LIFE

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REV. LUTHER HAYNES.

New York: Wiley & Putnam, 161 Broadway. 1844.

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LIFE

AND

ELOQUENCE

OF

THE REV. SYLVESTER LARNED,

FIRST PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN NEW-ORLEANS.

BY R. R. GURLEY.

NEW YORK:
WILEY & PUTNAM,
161 Broadway.

1844.

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To Col. James Larned,
of Washington City:

July 4th, 1844.

My dear Sir,—

To no one with so much pleasure or propriety can I dedicate this very imperfect and inadequate Memorial, as to yourself. To your kindness and partiality was I indebted for the happiness I have enjoyed in preparing it, and though I am very sensible that the papers of your distinguished brother might have been committed to some person more able than myself to do him justice, yet, I may be allowed to say, to no one cherishing higher respect for his virtues, or sincerer regard for his fame. If, in this portrait, you distinctly recognize his expressive countenance, and he seem again to live before you,—and more, if to the thousands who gathered admiringly around him during the brief period he was permitted to dwell on earth, the recollections of what he was, of what he said, and of what he did, become more vivid and permanent, I shall receive for this humble tribute, an ample reward.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

With perfect respect,

Your friend and obedient servant,

R. R. GURLEY.

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PREFACE.

It is unnecessary, perhaps, to explain the various causes which have operated to prevent the earlier appearance of this volume. Though some years have elapsed since most of the papers of the late Mr. Larned were obligingly placed at my disposal, a few were received at a later date, and, desirous as I was of giving to them early attention, causes beyond my control, duties not to be postponed, compelled me to lay them aside for a period of less disturbing cares and more quiet contemplation.

In the mean time, I sought various opportunities of conversation with those who had personally known him, and, during a visit to New Orleans, enjoyed the pleasure of social intercourse with many to whom he had been a pastor, and who were happy to communicate their recollections of his manners, his character, and his eloquence. It is a duty, as well as pleasure, to acknowledge special obligations to the Rev. Dr. Post, of Charleston, S. C., and the Rev. J. N. Danforth, of Alexandria, D. C., for much valuable aid, and to other

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friends, too numerous to mention, for interesting facts and suggestions.

No small difficulty was felt in the selection of the discourses for publication. While a few of those chosen are from the early productions of their author, most are from those preached but a short time before his death. Others, and several of them perhaps of merit equal to any here submitted, still remain, and may hereafter constitute another volume.

It is a very general, and, I think, just opinion, that no minister of the same age, has ever, at least in this country, left deeper impressions of his eloquence than Mr. LARNED, though, in regard to the causes, there may be some diversity of sentiment.

It will be found, that however much, in the preaching of Mr. Larned, is to be ascribed to his voice and manner, the matter and style of his discourses are remarkable, that they are worthy of critical examination and study, and that those who would combine in their sermons ease and elevation, simplicity and energy, who would leave to their hearers no time to sleep, and no wish to be absent, regret only at the brevity of the service, and delight at the return of the Sabbath, will find the perusal and re-perusal of these compositions to their advantage.

But I trust they will be read for higher ends—that,

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in them, their author will continue, though dead, to speak; to arouse the impenitent; to encourage the anxious, and confirm the obedient; to pour light upon the path of the doubtful, consolation into the bosom of sorrow, and to guide many a weary pilgrim to the land of everlasting rest.

August, 1844.

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LIFE.

The life of the subject of this memoir was splendid, but brief. He was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on the 31st of August, 1796. His father, Colonel Simon Larned, a man of few words, deep judgment, and rare wit and humor, was a meritorious officer in the Revolutionary contest, a colonel in the United States' army during the whole of the last war, and at one time represented his district in Congress. His mother possessed extraordinary intellectual powers, eloquence, unaffected piety, and a very ardent and energetic spirit of benevolence. "She was," (says one acquainted with her, and with this her son in his childhood,) "a woman of masculine mind, abounding with the sources of a rapid and exuberant eloquence. In conversation with her—and into her conversation, she always pours the ardor of her natural feelings,—I have often been surprised at the native energy and copiousness of her thoughts and language." Mr. Larned appears to have inherited much of her peculiar genius. It might be said, in the language, slightly altered, applied to the mother of Cur-

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ran, "She had a deep, fresh, womanly, original mind, like the clear river that comes gushing and flashing and discoursing from the large lonely mountain—from the outlaws' and fairies' home to the village. She had a waste of old traditions and passions lying grand and irregular in her soul, and a bright, warm love of her children came pouring upon them, and making them grow green at her feet." She guarded the mind of her son against the dangers which beset youthful genius, and sought to instil into his heart religious truth. The development of his talents in childhood was very remarkable, and his mother often noticed that in his sleep the motion of his lips and fingers showed that his mental faculties were earnestly engaged.* "A certain confident decision of mind and manner, (says one of his earliest associates,†) an originality and boldness of thought and expression; a surprising facility equally of acquiring and imparting knowledge, with something like pity for slower minds; a resolute confidence that nothing within the grasp of the human intellect was too high for *him* to reach, seemed natural to him wherever he was, or whatever his age." It is said that on one occasion, when at play with his bro-

* "I would however observe, that from the earliest period of his life, when his mother's fondness was watching over his sleeping hours, his fingers would be guiding his pen, and his tongue lisping words for spelling. In his wakeful hours he was ever performing acts of benevolence, which was very gratifying to his mother; and this disposition, my dear sir, lived with him while he lived. He has ever been an affectionate, obedient, and pleasant child, and ever evinced the greatest affection for his brothers, sisters, and all mankind."—*His Mother's letter to Dr. Cornelius.*

† Rev. J. N. Danforth.

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ther, he laid a wager that he would make him weep by talking to him, and that by his pathos he soon melted him into tears. At Lenox Academy, where he became prepared for college, his abilities were strikingly exhibited; "it was all one with him whether he recited with one class, or two or three classes. In each he was equally at home, in each profiting beyond his equals."* He was at this time stimulated by the desire of obtaining early admission to college.

The gentleman to whom we are indebted for interesting reminiscences of these early years of Larned, mentions that as the courts of law held their sessions in Lenox, some of the students of the academy were ambitious of trying their powers of argument and eloquence before a mock tribunal of their own, and that the subject of our biography, as an advocate in this forum, spoke with a fluency, sensibility, self-confidence,

* "As we were walking home to Pittsfield one Saturday afternoon from Lenox, (the distance is six miles, and we often used to walk it,) we stopped to rest awhile, near a rock by the road-side, which rising a little from the earth, presented so level a surface, as to constitute a kind of platform. On this the young traveller mounted, and with the heavens for a sounding board, and myself for an audience, pronounced a speech of which I enjoyed the sole benefit, and which I, of course, praised to the heart's content of the orator. Little did I then think that these stirring energies of a boy's mind were one day to be sanctified to God in the highest sphere which is allotted to man—the MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION—that the young and nascent genius which thus broke forth, as by a kind of sudden impulse, would in future years cast its enchantments around the minds of listening thousands.

"I may add, how little did I suppose that he who was thus trying his powers of mind and voice as matter of amusement to himself and to me, would one day seriously encourage and exhort me to aspire to that ministry which was now to be his work, his joy, and his honor, whether living or dying."—*Rev. J. N. Danforth.*

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and originality, that gave promise, (had he been destined to the legal profession,) that few, if any, would have towered above him in efforts or fame.

At the age of thirteen, he delivered an oration on the Fourth of July, before a large audience in his native town, (the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth being present,) which received great applause. Something of the enthusiastic favor shown towards the orator on this occasion may have been owing to his extreme youth, yet his performance, now before us, is a composition of uncommon merit for one of his age.*

* This address, is stated in the Presbyterian Annual to have been delivered at the request of the students of Pittsfield Academy; but it was certainly heard by the citizens generally. The following is extracted from the concluding passage:

"Peculiar blessings are bestowed on the rising generation. We enjoy the inestimable privilege of a Government founded on equitable principles, and in its nature republican. We have the experience of ages and of nations, who have gone before us, and pointed out the road to empire and to glory. How unpardonable then would it be in us, how deservedly should we merit eternal infamy, were we not to advantage ourselves by their examples, and imitate their virtues, while we contemn their vices. It is an old and established maxim, that 'Like causes produce like effects.' We here behold the rock which devoted the ancient republicans to destruction, and the causes which eventually consigned them to the grave of oblivion While we contemplate the striking picture of the baleful consequences of luxury, with its concomitant evils, shall we inconsiderately rush onward in the wild career of folly and extravagance, and meet the same melancholy fate? Ah, no! on our fathers depends our salvation. They are invested with the powers of government, and to them we are to look for rescue from the impending ruin. Direct us aright, and preserve our morals pure, and our virtue unsullied, that we may vie in eminence and glory with the nations of the world. If we peruse the history of ancient republics, we shall find their laws and precepts guarding against excessive wealth, as the parent of every species of vice and immorality. Beware of its baneful effects. They were careful early to impress on the minds of the youth a love of

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He entered Williams College in 1810, being then in his fourteenth year, but the thoughtlessness and imprudence too natural in boys of his peculiar temperament at that age, led him into conduct which caused his removal, by order of the faculty, from the institu-

economy; and the smallest deviations from the rigid rules of frugality incurred the severest censure. Trained up in manly exercise, which invigorated the body, and qualified them to endure, with patience, hunger and fatigue,—with fortitude to combat evils, to others insurmountable, they were taught to despise the effeminacy of surrounding nations. Ambitious of their country's glory, devoid of fear, magnanimous and persevering, they ever marched intrepidly onward to victory or death. Insulting monarchs, on their haughty thrones, were brought to tremble at their very name. While they preserved this peculiar and happy mode of education, so essential to the prosperity of every community—while they swerved not from the principles of their constitution—while the love of country continued to warm the breast of every citizen—while they were actuated by the desire of fame, and inspired with a laudable ambition, their national virtues were preserved in their original purity, and their glories remaining unsullied, formed the summit of the felicity and renown of republics.

"Having arrived at this degree of perfection, wealth, with its accursed train, introduced by conquest, and a more familiar intercourse with nations, absorbed in the pleasures of sensuality, transplanted the venality and corruption of those kingdoms into their bosoms. Their former honorable poverty was now deemed infamous—the source of virtue and honor contaminated—soon, too soon, was their meridian sun obscured with clouds—rapid their decline—short the evening of their day;—their glory levelled with the dust. These melancholy truths every page of ancient history confirms; and even 'The mourning shade of Sparta's self whispers her assent to the sad reality.'

"Then, my friends, let us endeavor to imitate the example of our worthy predecessors, and strive to obtain such an education that we may be useful to our country, if our fathers are able to entail to their posterity the liberty of their country, unimpaired. And I trust the recollections of the toils and dangers which our fathers passed through in acquiring our independence, will cause our youthful hearts to glow with patriotism, and stimulate us to perform actions worthy of ourselves."

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tion for a season. Indeed, at this time he appears to have wandered into dangerous paths, and to have thrown off in a great degree the restraints of conscience, authority, and good example. In 1811,* he was sent to Middlebury College, where he found himself in the midst of a community distinguished for the purity of its morals, and among young men of studious habits and religious principles. In the autumn of this year, (but it is believed before his connexion with the college,) a remarkable attention to religion prevailed among the students, and about forty became, it was hoped, practically obedient to the commands of Christ. When, after the winter vacation, in the spring of 1812, they assembled, the influence of their piety was evident, and their conversation and religious meetings attracted the attention, and made an impression on the mind of Larned. He was observed, (by one who was subsequently among his most intimate friends,) immediately after his union with the college, to attend constantly the Sunday morning prayer-meetings instituted by the religious students, and, at which, others were seldom seen. This excited some surprise, as his irregular conduct at Williams College was known; but he afterwards stated, that on coming to Middlebury he resolved to choose the religious for his companions, and to attend their devotional meetings. This purpose, formed, as he said, from regard to his own character, and in compliance with the advice of his pious and most excellent mother, was carried into effect, not only by his attendance at the meetings just mentioned, but by his selection, for a friend and room-mate, of an intel-

* According to Dr. Davis: Dr. Post states in the spring of 1812.

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ligent and exemplary Christian,* subsequently elected to a professorship in the college, and whose sudden death deprived the institution of one of its brightest ornaments. His choice of virtuous associates was of great benefit. It proved a safeguard against temptation, and by thus walking with the *wise*, he became more and more disposed to receive those divine truths which are the power as well as the wisdom of God unto salvation.

For some time after his arrival at Middlebury, though evincing a decided respect to the institutions and duties of religion, Christianity appears to have exerted no vital influence on his heart. The peculiar warmth and vivacity of his feelings increased in him the ordinary tendencies of our nature at his age to excess in social pleasures and frivolous amusements. The elements of his character were powerful and easily excited. Without disguise, generous, and possessing an exhaustless fund of humor and the happiest talent for conversation, his company was much sought, and his confidence perhaps too easily obtained.† But of the means and circumstances of that great change in his religious views and purposes, which occurred during his junior year in college, in the spring and summer of 1812, from which he dated the origin of his best hopes, and which directed his way to the Christian

* The Rev. Solomon Allen, chosen in 1816 Professor of the Ancient Languages, and who in September, 1817, died from injury produced by a fall from the roof of the College building.

† "Who means no guile, be guiled soonest shall;
And to faire semblaunce doth light faith annexe.
The bird that knows not the false fowler's call,
Into his sudden nett full easily doth fall."

Spenser.

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ministry as a profession, I shall here submit the statements of several of his friends, two of them fellow-students with him at the time, and the other intimately acquainted with the facts in this portion of his Life:

"About this time (says one*), several persons died suddenly in Middlebury. One of them, a young man, was ushered into eternity without leaving any evidence of his preparedness for heaven. His death solemnly impressed the mind of Larned. He was led to consider what would be his own situation if suddenly summoned into the presence of his Maker. I do not say that the exhortations and appeals which were occasioned by this dispensation of Providence had no influence on him. They doubtless had. But it is distinctly recollected that he himself said, they were his own, solitary, midnight reflections on it, that filled him with anxiety and alarm. In accordance with the Psalmist's declaration, he communed with his own heart upon his bed and was still. He said very little on the subject of religion to any one, though from a few expressions which fell from him, and from his serious air and deportment, it was hoped by his religious friends, that the Spirit of God had touched and softened his heart. His convictions were not sudden but gradual—the result, under God, of much consideration. He reflected upon the sins of his past life—he examined his heart—saw it destitute of holiness, and was convinced that for his transgressions of the Divine law he was justly condemned. His sense of guilt for having so long neglected the mercy of God in Christ was great, and he was ready to sink into despair.

"In this state of mind, as he was retiring from the chapel after prayers, one evening in the early part of June, he took the hand of a religious friend, and said with emotion, 'My

* Dr. Post.

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dear friend, I am a lost sinner; will you pray for me?' They retired to a neighboring grove, and spent more than one hour in prayer and conversation. Larned returned to his room, and continued for a number of days in great anxiety of mind—spending most of his time in reading the scriptures—solitary reflection and prayer—having intercourse with but two or three pious friends. At one time he was told by an indiscreet though well-meaning individual, that it was a sin to pray before he had submitted to God. This added for a while to his perplexity and distress, until led by a friend to a view more just and accordant with the word of God.

"From the time of his first religious impressions until he found joy and peace in believing, was, it is thought, a period of from two to three months."

Says another,*

"If my recollection be correct, the providential means of his awakening was the death of a neighbor who was summoned into eternity on a very short warning. This was not a new event to him, but, by the agency of the Spirit, it was carried home to his conscience with irresistible power. Death appeared terrible. His sins arose in array before him. The law uttered its wrathful sentence against his guilty soul. What could he do? It was not until he bowed in humble subjection to the will of God, that he found peace, and when he began to feel the emotions of a heart renovated by the Spirit of God, he entered the service of his divine Master with characteristic ardor. He addressed a letter to his mother, informing her of the great change in his views and feelings, and telling her what delight it would give him, on his return home, to attend that despised prayer meeting, held in a certain hum-

* Rev. J. N. Danforth.

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ble house in the neighborhood, where he had been wont to attend for the purpose of making sport of serious things.

"Not that he was an infidel, maternal instruction had preoccupied the ground—but he would indulge in that thoughtless impiety, which, while it provoked God, and grieved his people, emboldened the unbeliever in his career of wickedness. In such a character, the change to piety is more conspicuous and decided than in one uniformly adorned with an amiable morality."

Says a third,*

"That he exceeded most others when he entered college, in levity, thoughtlessness, and mirth, is a fact of which you have been often assured. So completely did the world and its follies engross his attention, that during his convictions in his junior year, he told me, 'he had no recollection that the thought that he must die had ever occurred to him until that time.' In getting his lesson in astronomy. he said, 'All at once he had such an overwhelming display of the Almighty power and majesty of God, that he was for some minutes lost in astonishment and wonder; and then for the *first* time he thought of the condescension and goodness of God in sparing and preserving so insignificant a being as himself. His convictions were of that deep cast which marked the freedom and strength with which he engaged in every thing he undertook, even his amusements. He spent considerable part of the two or three last days of his anxiety and concern in my room—some of the time almost frantic with despair—fearing there was no mercy for one who had lived so many years without thinking of death and his duty to God. After passing some hours in the room alone one day, in prayer and reading, he left it and went hastily into the woods. I sat by the window, and waited to see him

* Rev. B. Chase.

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return; and as he came, I saw that look of despair was exchanged for a smile. Coming in, he exclaimed, 'O, C——, I went into the woods to kill myself, for I could not endure such dreadful despair. But when I arrived there, I thought I would make one more prayer, and then act. I knelt down,' said he, 'though I feared the trees would fall and crush me, and before I rose I found such joy and peace as cannot be described!'"

The development of religious experience varies much in form and manner in different individuals, according to the varied shades of opinion and habits of thought in the different Christian societies with which they are connected. Among all the true disciples of Christ there is unity of spirit; yet the work of conversion might be described in different terms by a member of the English church, and the descendant of the Puritans, the one being taught to guard against enthusiasm, and the other to repress no sentiment which may serve darkly to contrast the sin and misery of our nature with the power and mercy of God. In some minds the love of God springs up under the gentle encouragements of the Gospel, while others are moved to seek it from a sense of guilt and the terrors of a coming retribution. The still voice of reason and the fair countenance of virtue win some to goodness, while others seem at first inclined to walk in her paths by the thunders that alarm and the despair that overcasts them in every other way.

The conduct of the subject of our memoir at this crisis, was marked with all the sincerity, zeal, boldness and determination, natural to him, and exalted by a sense of duty and the love of Christ. Those who

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were present represent the scene as one of peculiar interest, when he first publicly avowed his Christian faith and hope. "Imagine to yourself," (says his friend,) "a youth of noble appearance, known to have been a leader among those uncontrolled by religion, rising in the midst of a crowded room, frankly, but with modesty and meekness, expressing regret and shame for the sins of his past life,* his utter renunciation of them, his reliance by faith upon the Saviour, and his purpose to devote himself to his service and glory. Imagine that you heard him in that tone of manly fervid eloquence for which he was afterwards so much distinguished, appeal to those around him, and urge their reconciliation to God, and finally, with humility and earnestness, imploring for them as well as himself, the choicest blessings of the Almighty, until all were affected to tears, and you would have a faint idea of the scene when the youthful Larned first confessed Jesus Christ before men."

From this hour he entered with energy upon the discharge of his duties as a Christian—regularly attended the meetings held by the religious for prayer and mutual improvement, and turning his thoughts from the law, to which, as a profession, they had been directed, determined to consecrate his life to the service of the Most High in the ministry of Christ.

During his collegiate course he showed himself capable of excellence in general scholarship,

* "With that, like one that hopelesse was repryv'd
From deathe's dore, at which he lately lay,
Those yron fetters wherewith he was gyv'd
The badges of reproach, he threw away."

Spenser.

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yet being somewhat averse to continued study and abstruse inquiries, won his chief distinction in literature and oratory, though in one of his letters he speaks of having amused himself with calculating eclipses. So distinguished was he, even at this period, for his compositions and eloquence, as to call forth the remark from the president of the College,* "that in these respects he was not surpassed by any youth of his years, whom he had ever known," and that should he enter the ministry, and his life be spared, "he would, as a pulpit orator, have no superior in the country." Though much of his time was devoted to reading and social intercourse, and comparatively little attention given to his lessons, such was the quickness and force of his genius, that he uniformly acquitted himself with credit at his recitations.

During this year he delivered an oration "on the establishment and effects of British power in Hindostan," which shows a cultivated intellect, taste, and imagination,† very rare at the age of sixteen, and clearly foretokening the distinction which he afterwards obtained.

* President Davis.

† The following are the introductory sentences of this oration:

"The loss of national independence is a subject of mournful contemplation. Such is the nature of man, that no government, of whatever description, can crumble into ruins without an epitaph. It is not with a nation as with an individual; the man dies, and his memory descends with him to the grave; but when a nation falls a sacrifice to the slow but fa al operations of revolution, every cause of its decay is scrutinized, with all the sagacity of the politician, and the keen investigation of the philosopher. To sympathise with unmerited suffering is natural to the human heart. This practice, so amiable in its nature, and so beneficial in its consequences, has its foundation in a principle implanted

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The following extract from a letter to his sister, dated at Middlebury, May 5th, 1813, is interesting, as being from among the earliest specimens of his correspondence, and as expressive of his deep sense of the vanity of all things compared to the hopes which Christianity inspires.

"Day after day convinces me of the fading nature of all things below—but still I go on as though I did not believe it. In a little time at most, we shall be in the grave—of how much value then will be earthly popularity, riches and honors —and yet how great a proportion of the world are grasping and grasping and grasping at a shadow, which continually eludes them, while the real substance might be obtained by

in our constitutions,—a principle which gives rise to one of the most noble and enrapturing exercises of soul, and does honor alike to the man and the warrior."

After a glowing description of the condition of India prior to the invasion by the English, and the horrible evils said to have been produced by the East India Company and its agents, he concludes in these words:

"Such is the epitome of the gloomy history of Hindostan. But, although printed in blood, although every page exhibits in capitals the name of the East India Company, yet let it not be imagined that this has been the effect of chance. That Being who rideth upon the wings of the wind, and resteth the beams of his chambers in the waters, also directed the energies of this tremendous storm. He has promised to give his Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; and he determined to fulfil this promise by the intervention of these extraordinary agents. After the thunder had died away, and the lightning had spent its force, the rainbow glittered in the heavens—the star of Bethlehem arose, and conducted the benevolent Swartz and his compartners in glory, to the shores of India. By the united efforts of these modern apostles, the thick woven veil of ignorance has been torn asunder, and the light of the Gospel has penetrated the gloom; and although it is yet but twilight, we confidently hope tha time is not far distant when the sun of righteousness shall beam upon this ill-fated people, in all his meridian splendor, and they shall know the truth as it is in Jesus."

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merely asking for it. Martha! I do think the angels in heaven would almost disbelieve this sad degrading story. The only thing for us to do is to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Let us do all the little good we can while here, and in the glorious morning of the resurrection, when the light of eternity shall burst upon the night of the grave, we shall meet our Saviour never more to sin, to weep, or to be sorrowful."

In the autumn of this year he wrote to his brother George, who had entered the army, inviting him to be present at the commencement in Middlebury, when his connexion with the college was to terminate, and he was to deliver an English oration; and responded with warmth and patriotic enthusiasm to some expressions of apprehension in his brother's letter, for the safety of his father, then engaged in the military service of his country. The passage too well illustrates his sense of honor as well as of religion, to be omitted.

"It did not surprise me to hear you express yourself as very anxious for the safety of our beloved parent. Your solicitude cannot surpass mine; but I think I have one consolation—he is in the hands of 'his Father and my Father, of his God and my God.' I feel willing to have him go. I believe the cause in which he is engaged to be a just one, and much as I deprecate the horrors of war, I think every sinew ought to be exerted in its prosecution, especially as so great a part of the American people unblushingly oppose the constituted authorities of their country. I should prefer, my dear George, to see the heart either of him or yourself palpitating on the point of the bayonet, than to have you return in disgrace and shame to our family. Against one thing I cannot but caution you (though I hope and believe

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it unnecessary), the profaneness of a military life. It is a strange notion, that a man cannot be a soldier unless he be a profane swearer. Where then is Wallace, Tell, and Washington? Were not they soldiers? Were not they patriots? Yes; they were. But they did not blaspheme the God that made them. An opinion in favor of this practice will not accompany a person into eternity—no, it dies on a death-bed. You are now, my dear brother, entered upon a career which will either be useful or the reverse to yourself and friends. Go on—gather the laurels of renown in every honorable manner possible—remember mercy and justice—remember that the fame, which is tarnished by the tears of the widow and the fatherless, or which mixes with the death-groans of a vanquished enemy, is a poor acquirement. Pursue, in every respect, the course of conduct for which you have been characterised, and you shall go accompanied by the sincere prayers of your affectionate brother."

At the commencement, in this year, he delivered an oration on the *Fall of Poland.* "It was especially," (says a friend of his,) "in the then political state of the world, one of those free and inspiriting subjects, on which he could spread the wings of his imagination for a bold and brilliant flight. It admitted, also, of ardent and impassioned appeals to such principles and recollections in American bosoms, as are cherished with an enthusiasm bordering on idolatry. It gave full scope to that powerful invective, the weapon so effectually used by Demosthenes against the Macedonian tyrant, and by Chatham against a haughty and oppressive English ministry. Had Larned entered the political arena, he would, doubtless, have honorably competed with the first orators and debaters in the nation, for his eloquence was of that bold, ready, ener-

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getic character so pleasing to Americans, so consonant to the genius of our institutions, and so successful in the popular assembly of the nation. There was also a certain elegance and moral beauty, which, without diminishing its energy, gave it a captivating power; for there is that in human nature which renders homage to the beautiful and graceful, whether in art, science, nature, or the living form."*

He became a member of the Church of Christ in his native town of Pittsfield; and immediately after his departure from college, commenced his theological studies in connexion with the theological seminary at Andover, Massachusetts. At this period, he had just entered upon his seventeenth year, and though his sense of religious duty was deep and unequivocal, yet he retained that fine, unaffected, frank air and tone of cheerfulness and independence which were his endowments by nature, and which one of the best constitutions and unimpaired health had enabled him to preserve. At this early age, and ever after, he appears to have felt an aversion to mere formal shows of piety, and to have been more concerned to acquire sanctity of character than the reputation of it. If the fault of levity was sometimes his, none ever suspected him of insincerity or hypocrisy. A few extracts from letters addressed to his sister, during the few months of his residence at Andover, will prove the best comments we can supply, upon his thoughts, sentiments, and purposes. The first is a playful note, and bears date Andover, 22d Feb. 1844:

* A copy of this oration is not to be found among the manuscripts before us.

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"My Dear Sister—may command the first moment of leisure I have had for several months. Our studies this year are peculiarly pressing and important, which renders time uncommonly valuable. However, I need not seek for an apology: ascribe my neglect to any thing you please but a debility of affection. I see by a census sent me from Pittsfield by my friend C——, that you have an increase of population in your family. By the terms used, ('Capt. H. has an assistant advocate,') I conclude that the youthful miracle, as H—— calls such things, is a son. Presuming that he has not a name, I am disposed to recommend one for your consideration—it is Sylvester Larned. The word Sylvester is derived from the Latin, and conveys the ideas of rural scenes and imagery. You easily perceive the connexion which this definition has with the character of a poet. As to Larned, it carries its meaning on its face, for by inserting an *e*, you will see it constitutes a trait of character which few are said to have, and which fewer possess. You will bear in mind, also, that the name belongs to me, which, I presume, will give it adventitious value."

To the same:

"ANDOVER, 10th April, 1814.

"I have taken up my pen to write a plain, honest letter. If I should lose sight of all the beauties of style, I can plead at least one excuse, that my attachment to an amiable and beloved sister needs no ornament of language in order to appear sincere. Affection need not beg assistance from the dictionary: every one has dictionary enough in his own head to speak what he thinks, and though some may write a friendly letter without a friendly heart, no man can have a friendly heart without writing a friendly letter. Epistolary writing is in itself most irksome: the reflection that we are addressing a friend alone is a recompense for the

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pain. But, dear sister, how happy should I be could I look forward to nothing worse than the tediousness of letter-writing. To one of my youth, impetuosity, and weakness, a correct prospect of the future must give anxiety. Thousands, infinitely better than myself, have sunk under the pressure of unexpected temptations, and brought disgrace upon their solemn profession. I am preparing for the ministry! I, who am but dust and ashes! O, M——, you would pity me could you see the tumult which frequently arises in my bosom. How unworthy is he to preach the great truths of redemption in public to an audience that may hang upon his lips, who is either too weak or too wicked to set an example of piety in private life! Again and again have I half resolved to relinquish the study in which I am engaged—to retire to merited obscurity, and seek peace far from the turmoils of the world. But to this there are insuperable objections. Duty commands me to satisfy the hopes of my friends, and to do all the good I can to the cause of religion. Which way shall I go? O, my dear sister, all is dark and cheerless before me. The more a person advances into the mysteries of the Bible, the more he is amazed by the stupendous plan of Redemption, and the more he is bewildered by a view of his own ingratitude. At times I feel cheerful—a ray of hope animates me to go on in the sacred office—a hope that I shall not be suffered to stain the records of Heaven by my ill conduct. Again, there are seasons, when not a glimmer is seen on the gloom of despondency. If an Apostle, in contemplating the solemnity of his station, exclaimed, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' what shall *I* say? But were I to relinquish my present pursuits, where shall I go? It is more dangerous to retreat than to proceed. Proceed, then, I will. God is faithful, and he has marked out my destiny."

In his next letter, dated in April, he avows a pur-

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pose of spending his approaching vacation in Boston, where he might pursue, under the guidance of able teachers, the study of the French and German languages, as also extend his acquaintance among the intelligent families of that city. He observes:

"No instructor in the French and German, to my knowledge, resides in this vicinity; and as the pronunciation of those languages is such, that it is impossible to get hold of it without an able instructor, the Professors of this College have advised me to spend the vacation in Boston. Besides, the knowledge of the French and German, and especially the French, is an acquisition which cannot fail to excite the attention of him who values an extensive acquaintance with literature, science, and especially of theology."

This plan he abandoned, and on the 3d of May, in a letter to his sister, feelingly alludes to the departure of his fellow-students, and especially to his sufferings when compelled to bid farewell to his dear classmates at Middlebury, "uncertain," he adds, "whether I should ever see any, and quite certain that I should never see all of them again."

"Never shall I forget my emotions when, for the last time, I pressed my friend B—— to my heart. Even now there are very few engagements which I would not sacrifice for his welfare. Sweet, very sweet, is the reflection, that I have one friend who loves me: a friend who, as such, honors the name of genuine affection. B—— is a man, a friend, a philanthropist. O, could I see him a Christian!

"Fond as may be our reciprocal attachment, it is certain that it must wither in the hour of death unless cherished by a principle that never dies. O, my dear sister, be assured that, notwithstanding my propensity to be gay—my seem-

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ing indifference, many of my hours witness the anxiety I feel for the everlasting welfare of my friends. I have just been reading the Memoirs of Mrs. Newell. Seldom have I perused a more interesting work. History may wreath unfading laurels around the brows of a Catherine, an Elizabeth, or a Jane Shore; but history cannot furnish an instance of so much disinterestedness, heroism; so much of every thing truly admirable, as is presented in the character of Mrs. Newell. Though she wore no sceptre, and her name may not live in columns of marble, yet long will her memory be cherished by the Christian world The book shall be sent you as soon as possible. I am anxious that H. and J. should peruse it. Some may attribute her conduct to enthusiasm. If this be enthusiasm, I most sincerely pray that I may possess it. The girls will read the work with interest, I dare say; and if they find nothing to approve in her religious zeal, will drop a tear over the grave of a woman who was an ornament to her sex, who died a martyr to the cause she loved, and whose spirit, we can rationally believe, is now living with the God who gave it."*

To the same:

"ANDOVER, 7th of May, 1814.

"You will feel surprised to see my stupid letters crowding in upon you so fast; but to one who knows the sincerity of my affections, I need offer no apology. The richest, and almost the only luxury, of separated friends is derived

* While at Andover, Mr. Larned appeared clad in a suit of grey, which occasioned some remarks among those students whose ideas of theological learning were associated with the grave and more solemn color of black; and in allusion to this he observes, "If, by-the-by, he (Mr. W.) should tell you some humorous stories about my *grey clothes*, you must not be alarmed, for I am sure I shall feel myself fortunate, if my character is never distinguished by a darker color than grey."

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from an interchange of letters; and this is peculiarly the case with me, shut out as I am from the human creation, and all companions, save my reflections and books. Picture to yourself, sister, a delightful retreat, about three miles from the village; place in the centre a comfortable farm-house, inhabited by a worthy but rustic couple, childless and noiseless, respected for their integrity, and famous for their butter and cheese; paint the beautiful Shaushire, winding its waters so as to form a lovely island in full view; embroider the whole scene with shrubbery and verdure; then seat your brother in a chamber which, though Gothic, is pleasant and comfortable, and which commands this prospect of rural elegance, and you will form some idea of the place in which I shall spend the present vacation. And why, you ask, do you, so fond of society, so in love with life, thus willingly go into retirement? Nothing is so favorable to a successful examination of the heart as seclusion. No where, so well as in solitude, can we candidly canvass the state of our moral feelings. And surely he who contemplates becoming a spiritual guide, a pilot through the storms of life, should be prepared for the stupendous undertaking. Were there more care and scrutiny on this score among the clergy, they would have less difficulties to struggle with in the world. A man of equivocal piety stands little chance of success in his exertions, whether those exertions be correct or not. So it is not enough to be pious; but people must believe it. Hence the necessity of so uniting humility with firmness, cheerfulness with solemnity, and forbearance with duty, that the world shall be obliged to confess 'we have been with Jesus.' Here we find, in my opinion, the grand reason why so many disbelieve the reality of religion. We tell them that all Christians experience a radical change of heart, and have the same general views. They lead us to a church of 150 or 200 persons, and ask

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us why the actions, manners, and, apparently, the motives of different members of this church, are so diametrically opposite. Or, perhaps, they will show us two clergymen, one very humorous and the other very grave, and say, 'One of these must be bad if you speak the truth, and which can we safely follow?' Now, although this reasoning is erroneous, still we ought, as far as possible, to wear away all such prejudices. And the best, perhaps the only way to do this, is to attend, first to our own natures, and then to the natures of those around us. By this means, and by comparing ourselves with others, by seeing how far we may or may not make ourselves all things to all men, by ascertaining the exact points of difference between judicious and injudicious example, we may learn a lesson which libraries could not teach us."

To this self-inspection, and early habit of observing human nature, and the causes which affect its character, may doubtless be traced much of the influence and success of the subject of this memoir. For reasons not very clearly stated, he left Andover after a few months, and took charge of a school in his native town of Pittsfield, where he acquired, in a short time, great popularity as an instructor, though from some of his letters we might infer that the employment was little congenial to his taste. In two or three letters to a classmate, written while occupied with his school in the summer of 1815, he expresses his purpose to join the theological seminary at Princeton before the close of the year, and in one thus speaks of his religious emotions:

"No one knows with what anxiety I have long looked forward to my futurity. Few and valuable are my hours of composure. They come, like the rainbow, to gild the

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darkness of the tempest, and so distant and deceptive are they, that the calmness they bring is rather the stillness of apathy than the serenity of a tranquillized heart. But still they are precious, for in them I forget that I am unhappy; In them I see, too, the object which has too entirely guided my views, losing its disproportions, and the love of ease gradually changing to the love of usefulness. I sincerely beg your prayers, that I may be directed in the paths of duty and innocence. There is an extensive revival of religion in Lenox, six miles distant. Twenty-five, chiefly young persons, will unite with the Church the next Sabbath. I once rejoiced in the prosperity of religion, and to some extent, I now do; but I fear that if I ever was a Christian, I have been losing ground ever since I first occupied it."

In another letter to the same, he thus notices the death of a young friend—

"Our friend and your classmate, you have doubtless heard, is in another world, and you will believe, in a better world. When in Andover, I watched with him. He was calm and composed. His was a complete victory over death. Venerated spirit! amiable, excellent man! He is now in heaven, covered with glory and righteousness."

On the Fourth of July of this year, he delivered an oration before the citizens of Pittsfield, exhibiting an accurate knowledge of the state of the country, and pregnant with patriotic sentiment, and the fire and hope of youthful genius. On the 20th of November, he informed his sister of his arrival at Princeton, and that every thing in his situation promised to make him happy, adding, that if he failed to improve, and above all, in the piety and humility of the Gospel which he was preparing to preach, the fault must be all his own.

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Indeed the whole letter, as illustrative of his character, and habits of thought and expression at this time, merits preservation.

"THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, PRINCETON,
"Nov. 20th, 1814.

"My Dear Sister,—In order to preserve my character as a young man of veracity, I am seated to write you a letter; but what to say I am utterly at a loss. The truth is, my log-book, if you had the whole of it, would not be amazingly interesting; for, though I am placed beyond the very frontier of old associations, I have hardly had time enough since I left you to acquire any new ones. But to begin in regular style: When I arrived in Albany, I met George; but as you have probably seen him I shall not tell you of any wonderful things that took place while we were together. In New York I quartered with a gentleman by the name of W——, and the topics of conversation were, of course, not unfrequently confined within the room where you now sit reading. After spending six days in the great city, hearing the Thunderer* preach, seeing all the curiosities, &c., &c., I took the steamboat for Princeton. Judge of my feelings in landing—the first man I saw in New-Jersey was my father! I could only speak to him, when the infamous horns blew us apart, and I again set forward. But you must tire. Suffice it to say, that with the privilege of a drunken driver, and a furious set of horses, we broke down only twice, and arrived here only five hours later than we expected. Princeton is on a hill, the only hill I have seen in the State. I tell the Jerseyans they are deficient in one ornament which New-England possesses, in those noble mountains which seem left by Nature not only for their splendid display of sublimity and beauty, but as specimens

* Dr. Mason.

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of the spirits that thrive under their brows. The people in this quarter are crowded into villages, between which you will see nothing but a long Arabian kind of desert, which presents a striking contrast to the Eastern States, that are so elegantly dotted over with the marks of cultivation.

"But to return to Princeton. It is a small village, containing nothing remarkable but the literary and theological institutions. The first is represented, here at least, the finest in the country. It has at present say 130 students; the Divinity College has just 40. For the last there is no building yet erected, but a foundation for one is laid, and the thing begins to move forward with rapidity and success. Our professors are Doctors ——— and ———, in whom every one appears to have unlimited confidence. So far as I have had opportunity to judge, I should pronounce them men 'full of faith and the Holy Ghost.' The young men under their care are generally genteel, friendly, and pious. Indeed, one of the traits almost every one here possesses is, particularly, politeness. I don't know that Princeton is remarkable for its piety; but, situated between the two great cities of America, and settled in no small degree by the first families, it can hardly fail of being polished. Mr. Post is my room-mate, and, thus far, every thing I have seen promises to make me happy; and I can only say, that if I do not improve in the facilities of every kind which surround me, and, above all, in the piety and humility of the Gospel which I am preparing to preach, the fault is my own. I must not forget to mention, for Sarah's sake, that the new pronunciation is in vogue here, 'to the nines': *duty* is called *juty*; *virtue, virchue; tune, chune; pursue, purshew*, &c. For the sake of appearing like others, and avoiding obstinacy, I, even I, have adopted the new system, though I do actually despise it as much as ever, and a little more. Give my love

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to Sarah, Aunt H—, the Major, Mary, Sally, and Harriet, and *do not write to me, I beg of you.*

"I remain, as usual,

"Your affectionate brother,

"SYLVESTER."

During his residence at Princeton, though he was accustomed to give much less time than others to his studies, he made rapid improvement, and was always prepared for examination on the subjects which occupied the attention of his class. What many of his companions investigated slowly, and acquired with difficulty, he perceived at a glance, and immediately made his own. The energy, originality, and comprehensiveness of his mind enabled him to bring under examination at once the complex parts of a great subject, to seize upon the best methods and examples for illustration, and the strong arguments by which it might be enforced.

To a near relation, whose husband had experienced heavy pecuniary losses, under date of 31st May, 1816, he thus writes:

"You are supposing, I fear, that you are in uncommon affliction; but have you ever inquired who gave you a kind and affectionate husband? who has blessed you with three dear children, on whom your fondest hopes delight to repose? why your parents, your brothers and sisters, are continued to you? why you are permitted to enjoy the Gospel, and to anticipate a home of everlasting rest? These questions should be asked whenever the murmur or complaint is about to arise. View this and every other affliction as the chastisement of a heavenly Parent. 'Have you received

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good at the hand of God, and shall you not receive evil?' Let every thing of this nature lead you nearer to God, wean you more from the world, and you may yet, like the Apostle, 'rejoice in tribulation.' In a temporal view, I have only one thing to fear—that your noble-hearted husband may be tempted to despond; but I hope and pray it may not be so. He has talents of the first rank—he has perseverance almost to a maxim, and he has a generous heart. With these he may easily recover; and if he can once recover from this shock, his second trial will be surer—he will learn prudence and coolness—so that this present trial may prove an advantage to him."

After alluding to some obstacles in the way of his continuance at Princeton, which, however, had been overcome, he thus speaks in a letter to his sister, June 6th, 1816:

"Many of my friends may, perhaps, be disposed to inquire why, amidst so many obstacles, I should persist in the study of divinity. I answer, my profession has been cautiously and conscientiously adopted. A sense of duty alone could have driven me forward when I was sensible how many sacrifices I must make—how many prospects relinquish. To this sense of duty I have adapted my conduct; by it I have suffered myself to be directed; and thus far I do not repent. I am well aware how often it is said that a temper like this savors of bigotry and enthusiasm; but it has been my duty to cultivate it, and I am not sorry. If the great Head of the Church be pleased to make me an instrument of advancing the temporal and spiritual interests of men in any degree, it will be a compensation more than equal to every sacrifice and every privation."

At this period, he not only added largely to his stores of theological, but of general knowledge, and

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assiduously cultivated both his intellectual powers and personal piety. He also engaged with ardor and resolution in many active duties, and kindly sought to benefit the members of the college. In a sketch of his life which appeared in the Presbyterian Annual for 1832, it is stated, "that he exerted a great influence over the minds of the youth generally; and it is believed that in more cases than one, he was the honored instrument of converting to God those who have since preached the Gospel themselves." His religious feelings became more vigorous and warm during the last years of his connexion with the institution. He spent a short time in Elizabethtown and Newark during a period of much attention to religious subjects, and from these places returned with higher purposes of intellectual and spiritual improvement, for the promotion of piety among the members both of the college and seminary.

The following letter of condolence, addressed to his brother George on the loss of his wife, is an effusion of much tenderness, blended with religious sentiments appropriate to the sadness of the occasion:

"PRINCETON, 24 Feb., 1817.

"My Dear George,—Will you consider it an intrusion on the sacredness of affliction, if I offer the sympathy of a heart which bleeds with your own? Rest assured, it is not the dictate of custom, but of friendship and feeling, that moves my pen. Most sincerely can I say that my tears flow with yours. Had I never known our dear Emily, still I could weep that an affectionate brother was widowed of his hopes and happiness. But I did know her. I had witnessed the loveliness of her character: I had seen the opening of that

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sweet blossom which is now withered forever. Is it not natural, then, is it not just, that I should be deeply affected by an event which blasts at once so many fond expectations, and shrouds so many brilliant and beautiful prospects? But I forbear. Far from me be the cruelty of recalling those scenes of distress, through which you have lately been doomed to pass. But, my dear brother, dearer than ever to my heart, may I add, there is one consolation which should soothe your distracted breast: Emily has died in the blessed hope of immortality beyond the grave. Here, amid all your sufferings, is cause of gratitude. I know that we are all apt to murmur at the bereavements of Providence. When our peace is disturbed, or our happiness interrupted, it is hard to submit. It is hard to believe that our afflictions are not the frowns of a Judge, but the chastisement of a Parent. And yet do we not hold all our blessings as pensioners on the bounty of Heaven? 'Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?' Has not He who gave, a right to take away? Let us, then, calm our agitated feelings. We know that what is done is right. Although the violence of grief may hide from our eyes the justice of the sentence under which we mourn, yet we may safely rest on that promise which has softened and sanctified the most agonizing dispensations: 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' O, may the death of our dear departed friend warn us of our mortality. May it teach us that the enjoyments of earth are at best but transitory and uncertain. May it detach our affections from the world and fix them upon high and noble objects. May it lead us to a Saviour who died for our sins, and who is presenting to us, every day of our lives, the offers of mercy, pardon, and immortality."

To his sister afflicted by the loss of her child, he

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soon after wrote, under date of the 24th of May, 1817:

"There is no affliction which befals you, especially of such a nature as that of the loss of a dear child, in which I do not participate. I sometimes think that those who go soonest are most happy. At any rate, they escape the trials which await mature age. Thus far they are certainly gainers; and we may hope that those who die in infancy are washed in the blood of the Saviour, not so much because the Scriptures have settled this question, as because where sin abounded grace does much more abound. Nor is it an objection to this hypothesis, that faith is made necessary under the New Testament, for faith is not of ourselves—it is the gift of God. Why not, then, suppose the gift extended to infants in the same way as to adults, since there is, in either case, no merit. But if it be comfortable to hope that those who die in infancy are happy, much more should it be to remember that God is just and right. Whatever are our allotments, He is the same. Let it, then, be our concern to secure an interest in his favor, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. I expect to be ordained in New-York on the 15th."

Near the commencement of the year 1817, the Rev. Elias Cornelius was appointed by the Trustees of the Connecticut Missionary Society, to engage in a missionary tour through the south-western States, and more especially to visit New-Orleans, (at that time containing a population of 30,000, and but one Protestant minister,) to examine its moral condition, and while preaching the Gospel to many who seldom heard it, to invite the friends of the Congregational or Presbyterian communion to establish a Church, and se-

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cure an able and faithful pastor. He was also desired by the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, to arouse the public to the claims of our Indian tribes, and solicit funds for the education of their children. Animated by that apostolic zeal which finally consumed him, on the the 13th of January, 1817, he proceeded through the southern portions of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, Hartford and New-Haven in Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, parts of Virginia and Tennessee, remained some time among the Cherokees, and after a journey of 3000 miles, (during which he preached one hundred and fifteen times, and raised about $4,400,) arrived in New-Orleans on the 30th of December. It was doubtless arranged, while Mr. Cornelius was in New-Jersey, that Mr. Larned should soon follow him, since the latter addressed a letter dated July 7th, 1817, to the former at Washington City, in which he says,

"Ascribe, my dear friend, my apparent remissness *in any case to any thing*, rather than want of affection—to any thing rather than a suspension of the high interest I shall take in every step of your tour, and in every blessing you dispense while performing it. I do most sincerely pray that the great Head of the Church may keep you in the hollow of his hand, and qualify and furnish you for the service in which we have alike enlisted. But to myself: On Tuesday week I expect to be ordained in New-York—shall leave Princeton the day after to-morrow, with a thousand regrets known to none but the aching bosom in which they lie. After my ordination, my project is to return to Massachusetts, spend six or seven weeks with my friends, and then

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for the great object. By the by, it is probable I shall change my route, and go by Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, &c., &c., to Savannah, whence I shall ship for New-Orleans. I say *probable*. The General Assembly appointed Doctors Nott and Romeyn for this duty. If one of them, which seems likely, should decline, the plan is, that I should accompany the other—if both decline, that I should go alone."

To Mrs. Larned* (the wife of his brother Col. James Larned), in Washington City, he wrote "in great haste" from New-York, on the 16th of the same month:

"I have taken my pen with a mind deeply solemnized by the transactions through which I have just passed. Yesterday I was ordained, in this city, to the work of the ministry. The services were performed in the Brick Church. Dr. Romeyn preached the sermon, Mr. Spring† made the consecrating prayer. Solemn, indeed, my dear sister, is the responsibility with which I am now invested. O that I may *live* the religion to the service of which I am now consecrated! O that God would communicate to me abundantly of His Spirit, to lead and encourage me in the path of duty—to hold me back from every action calculated to wound

* This admirable lady, eminent alike for her intelligence and varied accomplishments, and during her latter years, for active benevolence and unfeigned piety, died soon after the wife of the subject of this memoir, in Washington City.

† The present Rev. Dr. Spring. To this gentleman I am indebted for the following anecdote: At the close of Mr. Larned's examination by the Presbytery, the duty of preaching before that body was assigned to him for the next day. He informed Dr. Spring that he had no sermon. The Doctor suggested that he (Mr. L.) might occupy his study, and that he should retire thither immediately. He did so, and during the night prepared, and the next morning preached, a good sermon.

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the cause of the Redeemer—to make me useful to the Church and the world, and to prepare me to meet many seals of my ministry in the temple above. Looking beyond the temptations by which we are apt to be dazzled in the present world, how interesting, how important, how sublime, is the situation of a herald of the everlasting Gospel!—that Gospel which brings life and immortality to light—that Gospel which holds out to fallen man the only hope of salvation when these heavens and this earth shall have passed away. Well might the mind faint under such contemplations, were it not for that heavenly promise, 'My grace shall be sufficient for you.' This, truly, is a delightful reflection. Nothing can have a greater tendency to urge a minister forward in his labors, than to remember that he is but an instrument in fulfilling the great plans of God—that whether *he* be peculiarly blessed or not, these plans will move on to their consummation; and that one of them of the highest promise is, to save those who believe, by the foolishness of preaching."

Mr. Larned's first appearance as a preacher excited the highest expectations of the public, and left none who heard him to doubt the fervor of his devotion, the force of his intellect, or the simplicity, elevation, and power of his eloquence. Love and admiration attended his steps, churches were thronged wherever he preached, and the elements of moral and intellectual greatness so embodied in his fine commanding person, the intonations and compass of a voice never perhaps excelled, and an entire manner natural, bold, winning and majestic, left impressions upon every assembly he addressed, not to be effaced. He hastened to the bosom of his family in Pittsfield, to share for a few days, communion with those most

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dear to him, and to prepare for his southern tour; but he had only arrived when he was called to perform the last sad offices of religion in respect to a near relative and friend, while the illness of his father threw anxiety and gloom upon this home of his affections.

To one of his most intimate friends (now the Rev. Dr. Post of Charleston), he wrote—

"With heartfelt pleasure I to-day received your letter, accompanied by one from Nevins and another from Mrs. Bayard. At no period, more than at the present, could I feel the value of your friendship and sympathies. Little did I think when I reached home, that a second bereavement would so soon be added to that which I was last winter called to deplore in the death of Emily. Little did I imagine that on the very morning of my ordination in New-York, the kindness of strangers in a distant city was depositing the remains of Frederick Larned in the dust. You will remember that he was a cousin, very dear to all our family, of which he had often been an inmate. Finding his health declining in Boston, he shifted the operations of his business, and removed to Augusta, in Georgia. Not far from the 10th of July, he was taken with a bilious disease incident to northern constitutions in his adopted climate; but nothing alarming appeared in his case until on Sunday morning the 13th, the servant unhappily left the room for a few minutes, and on his return the patient was gone. Every search was immediately made. The intendant of the city ordered no expense to be spared—but no tidings. On Monday about noon, orders were given to prepare suitable instruments for dragging through the Savannah river, when, just as the instruments were to be applied, a cry was heard that a body was found floating on the water, and on examin-

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ing it, it proved to be all that was left of my poor lost cousin. In a paroxysm occasioned by the fever, he had thrown himself into the river. Yesterday, at the particular request of his mother, his brother, Capt. Larned, and his two sisters, I delivered a funeral discourse. I was deeply affected by the reflection, that on the same day Frederick was laid in the grave, while I was set apart to the ministry. My first sermon in the place where both of us were educated together was a funeral sermon for him. 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.' I feel, my dear Post, an unusual melancholy and solitariness, if I may say so, hanging around my heart. My brothers and sisters are all far away; Emily is dead, Frederick is dead, and every relative in this place wears the badge of mourning. My father, besides, is quite ill, and has been so for ten days. But I will not recount events that ought to purify rather than sadden me."

To the same, under date of September 25th, 1817, (the night before his departure for New-Orleans,) he writes,

"It is now 2 o'clock in the morning, and all the family but myself are asleep. I cannot sleep. The moon shines very brightly; my portmanteau and valise lie by me, packed for to-morrow's stage. Joseph goes with me to Detroit. I feel like a child. It is foolish, but I cannot help it. I have a feeling which superstition would call a presentiment, that I shall never more see my native town, or the kindred scenes which render it dear to me. This feeling was strengthened by the parting through which I yesterday passed. Martha wept as usual; but never did I before see Colonel H. and the little children weep. He was very much affected. O my dear Post, you cannot imagine my strange feelings. Indeed, I should not tell you them, did I not believe you loved

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me. I do most sincerely thank you for your refreshing letter. It was handed me this evening. So strange were my emotions, that I thought at the moment you were dearer to me than any other human being. But this was fancy, or something as wild. It is not fancy, however, to assure you, that you hold a very large place in my heart. I think I love you better every day. Little do they know me, who think I did not wish to stop at Princeton."

With the following effusion of his warm and generous nature he concludes this letter,

"I can only say, if I can do any thing for you, at any sacrifice, I will most cheerfully do it. Never have I felt purer joy than when I heard of E——'s joining the Church, and of J. S.'s intention to do the same. Remember me to both of them, and to all I esteem. Shall write to Nevins and Chamberlain before I get far.—Expect to preach next Sabbath in Utica. The people of ———, I had forgotten to tell you, have offered me, and I believe unanimously, any salary, if I will settle. And now, my dear friend, farewell. Futurity looks dark; the present is dark, and the past gives me little complacency. May the great Shepherd of Israel give you every blessing, and make you useful and happy. With singular feeling and sincere attachment, I remain, &c."

To the Rev. Mr. Cornelius, who had preceded him in his course to New-Orleans, he wrote from Buffalo on the 11th of October, apologising for not having earlier addressed him, and mentioning his detention, owing to the want of conveyance to Detroit.

"During my leisure," (he observes,) "I have gone to the Falls, to Lake Ontario, and to the theatres of the dreadful battles fought on this frontier during the war. I have also just

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returned from a visit to a settlement of Indians denominated the Six Nations.——

"The celebrated Falls of Niagara are inimitably grand and awful. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. As to the battle-grounds, I cannot say they gave me much satisfaction. The reflection constantly passing in my mind, that in all probability the majority of those who fell there were ——, God only knows. We, too, my dear brother, are soldiers; but how different the object and the weapons of our warfare. We come in the name of the Captain of salvation, to announce to mankind the intelligence of Jesus Christ, and him crucified. We are, or ought to be, clad in the armor of the everlasting Gospel. Let it, then, be our object to discharge our commission with that courage and fidelity so characteristic of those who have a master and motives infinitely inferior to our own."

From the same place, he wrote on the 14th to his friend Post, alluding with much sensibility to the death of Professor Allen:

"You will mourn with me, my dear Post, for you knew and loved him. Imagine my feelings, when, casting my eye transiently over a New-York paper, I saw the name of Allen under the head of deaths. 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.' Yes, thou excellent man, we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has received thy spirit! My dear Post, you are near to New-York, and I wish you to write a short obituary notice for the Spectator. Direct to Messrs. Lewis & Hall, and request them in my name to insert it. I say in *my* name, for I do not recollect that you are acquainted with either of them. So does life waste away! Let us improve this solemn and affecting Providence, and prepare to follow our deceased friend to the mansion of our common Lord and Redeemer. I am detained in this place from the want of a favorable

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wind. Already behind the season, behind my arrangements, and behind the expectations of the Board of Missions, you can readily conceive my anxiety to get forward. Since I heard of Allen's death, I feel an unusual depression. Which of us must go next? probably myself. I have entered on a hazardous and difficult object, but in the strength of the God of Israel I will proceed. O, that I had more piety to sustain and strengthen me. Let me most sincerely beg an interest in your prayers, and in the prayers of all the brethren in Princeton."

His subsequent letters to various friends during his progress by land from Detroit, through Ohio, and a part of Kentucky to Louisville, and thence by steamboat to New-Orleans, exhibit lively sketches of the scenery, villages, and population through which he passed, interspersed with touches of humor and expressions of affection, chastened now and then by those solemn thoughts ever presiding over the rich imaginings, the profound resources, the incessant and widely extending operations of his mind. Under date of the 22nd of November, he gave to his sister what he termed "a kind of log-book of his adventures."

In a letter of this date, he describes very particularly the Indian mounds at Circleville, Ohio. After stating that the area of the circle of one of these ancient fortifications (if such they may be called) is 19⅔ acres, and of the square 27⅔, he adds:

"You may judge of the magnitude of these vast embankments when I tell you that it took the Corporation of Circleville 200 days to dig one about half down, so that a road might pass through. But when I add, that the timber on the top of these embankments is as large as any in the sur-

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rounding country—that there are trees on them measuring nine and ten feet round, what idea can you form of their antiquity?"

Having mentioned that his brother and some other friends had accompanied him to the river Raisin, and (having left them,) that two days after he arrived at Fort Meigs, or the Rapids of Miami, he writes,

"Here I met with W., and J. H., and H. C., all of whom your husband knows. Once more we resumed our journey, and in company with the mail carrier encountered the Black Swamp, a business which took us two days in going 36 miles. Of all dreadful roads this is the worst. We were obliged to take a compass to direct us. Not even a horse-shoe track could be discovered. It was literally horrible. Our horses were most of the time up to their middle in water, and all the time plunging, diving, and rearing in the most frightful manner. By the mercy of a protecting Providence, we were preserved, and on Friday evening we were at Lower Sandusky. On the following day we started again with the mail carrier, although my horse was considerably lame. That night we arrived at the only house on the road, turned our horses into the woods, and laid down before the fire, with a blanket for our beds and our saddles for pillows, and slept very well. The next day we started again, and for the first time in my life I travelled on the Sabbath. There was, however, no alternative.* By night we reached an Indian's house, where my horse was too lame to proceed. By engaging to carry the mail, I procured my companion's horse, and set out alone for Delaware. Towards night I got lost in the woods, and to add to my distress, a wolf passed close by me. Providentially I recovered the road, and the next day had the satisfaction of seeing Delaware.

* There was no house for about seventy miles.

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Here Col. B——'s family treated me with great kindness, sent back for my horse, and furnished me with another to proceed on my journey.

"To-morrow I expect to preach, and the next day to start for Lexington. Although convinced, my dear J——, that I am in the path of duty, I cannot but look back sometimes with a sigh to the happy hours I have spent with you at Washington. If it be the will of Providence, I hope once more to meet you hereafter and renew our affection. But whatever may be in store for me, I shall always love you with unabated ardor, and as the highest proof of it, shall always pray that you may become truly pious. Oh, my dearest sister, be persuaded to relinquish this poor and perishing world, and secure an interest in the Redeemer."

To his brother, from Shelbyville, (Kentucky,) on the 12th of December he wrote:

"After a tedious journey through Ohio, I reached the river of that name about 17 days since. Here of course I struck Kentucky. It is a fine state; that is, the fertility of the soil and the means of getting rich are great. On the 2d of December I reached Lexington, where to my great joy I overtook my missionary companion, Mr. Chamberlain. Of this gentleman I have already given you my high opinion, and you can easily judge with what enthusiastic joy I welcome him as the partner of my sufferings and of my objects. In Lexington, I staid with Mr. M'Chord, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church. He is of the very first of men. From Lexington I came yesterday to Frankfort, where the Legislature of Kentucky is in session. I witnessed several displays, and was pleased. I also preached in that place. To-day I have travelled to the little village from which I date my letter; to-morrow I resume my journey towards Louisville, when I expect to take the steam-boat for New-Orleans.

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"As I advance nearer and nearer to the theatre of my expected labors, I feel more sensibly my responsibility. O, that my heart may be less attached to this world, and more to the great source of happiness. My dear brother and sister, I am arrived at that period when my life is rendered peculiarly uncertain. Pray receive it as my most earnest and affectionate admonition, be religious. And especially to you, my dearest J—, let me present the Gospel and the Cross of Christ as the balm of the afflictions you have suffered, and as the only safe refuge of your soul. May the God of Israel be with you both. Love to all friends, and write to father that you have heard from me."

In 1818, a voyage from Louisville to New-Orleans was very different from that at present. In one of several letters, addressed by Mr. Larned to his friends from on board the barque Newport, as she descended the Mississippi, he remarks:

"We have already been three weeks on our passage, and probably another will elapse before we reach Natchez, when these lines will commence their journey to Princeton."

Few, if any, perhaps, twenty-six years ago, in the early achievements of steam navigation, anticipated the wonderful improvements to which it was destined, nor was it easy to imagine amid the dangerous obstructions prevalent then in the western rivers, that they would soon be removed, and free, safe and rapid intercourse be opened between all points of the great valley through which they flow.

The impressions made upon the mind of Larned during this his first descent to New-Orleans, it may gratify an innocent curiosity to observe. Having pronounced the accommodation on board good, and the

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company agreeable, and mentioned the names of the several ladies who constituted the latter, he remarks:

"Mr. Chamberlain is the only passenger besides myself, with the exception of the ladies just mentioned. We have prayers morning and evening in the cabin, besides which, the captain permits us, every night, to have such religious exercises as we choose with the crew, who are not unfrequently joined by the crews of other boats, which chance to land at the same place with us over-night; for you must know that it is extremely hazardous to navigate the Mississippi after dark, on account of the prodigious number of sawyers or planters which abound in this crooked, irregular, and unstable river. The sawyers, to which I have alluded, are large trees which high water has dislodged from their banks, and after floating for a considerable distance down the current, their roots have become fixed in the bed of the stream, while the tops and trunks are elevated sufficiently high to form in themselves a most vexatious impediment to navigators, and also to create an eddy, into which it is highly dangerous to be drawn. And while I am on this subject, I would add that there are other considerations which constitute a serious drawback on the commercial advantages of the western waters, and on the prospects of that extensive country through which they pass."

He then enumerates the overflowing at high water of both sides of the Mississippi, the changes in the whole bed of the river, and earthquakes, and adds,

"These are very common, and very destructive. I myself have felt two since I have been in this quarter. At New-Madrid, in Missouri Territory, we landed to see the desolations of one of these terrible convulsions of Nature, and the appearance of the whole place was such as to afford an awful gratification to our curiosity. I have an idea,

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which I have never seen suggested elsewhere, and perhaps is unsound, that the changes in the channel of the Mississippi are owing not to any peculiarity in the nature or course of the river, but principally to these earthquakes, or rather to that combination of causes by which earthquakes are commonly supposed to be produced."

Among the intimate friends of Larned while at Princeton, were William Nevins, afterwards the Rev. Dr. Nevins, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Baltimore, eminent as a preacher and author, Charles P. M'Ilvaine, (the present Right Rev. Bishop of Ohio,) Reuben Post, (subsequently of Washington City, and now pastor of a Presbyterian church in Charleston,) J. Chamberlain, (at this time Dr. Chamberlain, President of Oakland College, Mississippi,) Remembrance Chamberlain, (now Pastor of a church in Georgia,) and several others in that state, occasionally on the list of his correspondents. To these friends, as to his near relatives, his heart was open as day, and his letters express a frankness and tenderness beyond the reach of art. His lofty talents, set off by an unsurpassed charm of manner, and the finest powers of conversation, gave him influence over every society he entered, and bound to him his associates with unmeasured strength of affection. Several of those who still remained at Princeton were his juniors in age and in the seminary, and therefore the more naturally watched with intense interest his bold and brilliant course. Nor can we estimate the degree to which their own purposes were elevated by the power of his example. He had been the delightful object on which their love and admiration centred, nor could they cease

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after his departure, in every social hour, to trace his progress, remember his looks and words, regret his absence, and invoke upon him every blessing of Heaven. The following extract from one of the letters of Nevins is a choice tribute to friendship, that knew no change or interruption until death :

"PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 3d, 1818.

"My Dearest Larned,—I should not have so long neglected to write to you, if I had not been so deeply engaged in the prosecution of my Spanish studies, as to find little time for any thing else. Now that I find myself a little disengaged, I think I cannot relieve my mind more effectually than by transmittting a few dull thoughts to you. I am sure you will accept of them if they bear the impress of friendship, although they may carry with them none of the marks of originality. Love, or rather impassioned lovers of other times, have so richly partaken of the blessing of invention, and so many scouts have been despatched to ransack the stores of the imagination for terms of affection, that I shall be contented to record my love in the old-fashioned but not less expressive language of soberness. Your departure shed a temporary gloom over my thoughts, which time, and company, and business have been able in a measure to dissipate, but not before I had succeeded in distinguishing amid its darkness those few little spots which hope had not yet ceased to occupy, and not till my thoughts had taken another coloring from a little mixture of heavenly faith, which comes with power to banish all that unpleasantness which usually succeeds the separation of those we love. I do not know when I shall see you, my dear Larned. Providence may not often bring us together in this world, but we can rejoice in the prospect of a meeting depending not on the uncertainties of human life, but the immutable declaration of God himself.

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The paths of the pious all point the same way, and are always converging to the same heaven, and although we cannot always perform our journey in company, there should be a consolation in the reflection that we are continually approximating each other—or, as you know I delight in figures, to change from land to sea, and take up the figure where I left it, it will be an additional source of consolation that we may sometimes meet on our ocean and hail each other, when, if we can but say 'All's well,' even that will be comfortable. But where am I going? After all, your absence did not create half so lasting a gloom in my mind as in ———. When evening came, I believe he would have given his piano, however much he values it, for one short hour with you. He says he loves you better than any man in the world, and you have already learned so much of his character as to know that his words generally come out very deeply charged with candor and sincerity."

Nor can I deny myself the pleasure of inserting the following sentences from the letter of one who, though now a prelate, illustrious for personal character and his influence in the Church, will, I trust, excuse the liberty I take, and peruse without regret the cherished sentiments of his youthful days, alike honorable to his piety, his friendship, and his regard to a Christianity limited by no forms of worship or ecclesiastical organization. The letter bears date Oct. 24th, 1817.

"It makes me rather melancholy when I go into your old room, and look about at various articles that recall the scenes of former days. Such absence of care, such leisure for enjoyment, perhaps such a meeting, will never again be ours. How often I think of you wandering lonely in the northern and western wilds, friends and attachments far away, only cheered and supported by the smiles and the care of our be-

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loved Master. But what else is necessary? What else is able to light the path of the pilgrim of Zion? O, that you may have this sweet consolation, and be able to mount superior to every trial, every affliction, and every danger. Should we both faithfully do the will of our heavenly Father, though it be in bending to the stroke of an afflicting Providence, or in placing our bodies on the ramparts of persecuted truth, with what holy joy and exulting triumph shall we embrace in the world above! May we both put on the whole armor of God!

"I have often thought of the joy it would occasion me to meet you, some, day, in one of the western States, unexpectedly. It seems almost worth while to go on purpose, but it may never be that we meet in any place. But such are the sacrifices that all must make, that would preach the Gospel; their comfort is the anticipation of that world where friends shall never part. I remember you in my prayers, though they are so unworthy; let me have a place in yours. Let us correspond as long as friendship lasts, for besides personal gratification, the intimacy may one day be productive of good to our respective churches, and to our common religion. Infinitely better would it be to religion, were all the members of the invisible Church joined in the bonds of friendship and intimacy with some of each denomination."

At Natchez, Mr. Larned received intelligence through a letter from Mr. Post, of the death of his father. He had left him in a reduced state of health, yet, as is usual in such cases, was little prepared for the sad event of his departure. "You conjecture," said he in reply to Mr. Post, "rightly as to my feelings, but I hope the bereavement has been sanctified." He also alludes to his increased love of retirement and worship, and adds,

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that "never before had the world seemed so trifling, or eternity so important."

To Mr. Nevins he wrote:

"Post's letter has this moment announced to me the death of my father. O, my dearest friend, this is a dreadful stroke. He was one of the best of parents. My heart almost breaks within me when I reflect that he is gone. But I shall see him again. How peculiarly precious to the mourner is the Gospel. It tells me my father will rise again."

To several of his relatives he wrote under the impressions caused by this event, urging the necessity of an interest in the love of God, for happiness in this world and preparation for the retributions of that which is to come.

On the 22nd January, 1818, after a passage of thirty-five days from Kentucky, he reached New-Orleans, and was received (to use his own words) by many with open arms.

"I found," he observes, under date of the 17th of February, "a dear and most excellent brother, Mr. Cornelius, who had arrived three weeks earlier than myself. He had done much to open my way, and with that avowed design, and that alone. I immediately began to preach; and have, on different occasions, delivered eight or ten sermons. The audiences are large and attentive. The field for usefulness is really immense. Amidst 34,000 people, I found but one Protestant church—Episcopal. After preaching here for three Sabbaths, several Americans conceived the project of retaining me in the city. Without entering into detail, suffice it to say, that a donation, amounting to $12000, has already been collected, and the above gentlemen assure me

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it will, at the lowest estimate, rise to $15,000. As soon as the subscriptions are returned, a loan will be effected, (to be redeemed by subsequent sale of pews,) sufficient to complete the sum of $40,000, when a church will be erected without delay. It is contemplated to make the church of brick, from Philadelphia; dimensions about ninety feet by sixty, to comprise a bell, a clock, and perhaps an organ. The subscribers, and others friendly to the object, have given me an invitation to become their pastor, which I have accepted. The compensation will probably be $4000 per annum, or $3000, with a house and garden, as the rent of buildings is excessively high. The building is to contain two thousand one hundred to two thousand two hundred persons seated. Possibly the general plan of Dr. Mason's will be the model, except that a church in this climate will need two additional doors in the side. They think of sending me to Philadelphia for an architect, and to make the building an honor and an ornament to the city. After a fortnight things will assume a more decided shape. One thing I believe most unequivocally—that the want of money will be one of the least difficulties. I had forgotten to say that a committee has been appointed to purchase a central lot in the city, capable of containing a church, session-house, and, if hereafter practicable, an academy. The climate of New-Orleans, in the winter, is surpassed in healthfulness by none in America. From November to July, a man of temperate habits is perfectly safe—I mean from any peculiarities of climate. The moral state of things is indeed terrible, but not so bad as is thought in the northern States. There is a very agreeable society of genteel moral families; there are many of the dear children of God,—how many, I have at present no means of ascertaining."

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Those who knew the Rev. Dr. Cornelius, or who have perused his Memoir by the Rev. B. B. Edwards, may imagine how his spirit was stirred within him during his visit to New-Orleans, and the zeal and vigor with which he preached, not merely to the wealthy and educated, but in prisons and alms-houses, to seamen and slaves, and to all classes of the population. "The various scenes," (observes his biographer,) "through which he passed, were of the most affecting kind, and he had the satisfaction of being hopefully the instrument of much good both to the bodies and souls of his fellow-men." The friendship, which had already commenced between this gentleman and Mr. Larned, was too pure and exalted to admit the least particle of envy or jealousy into the bosom of either, and continued without intermission and with accumulating power and tenderness, until its offices were suspended by death. Like David and Jonathan, they were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and now doubtless realize the bliss of a higher existence, eternally re-united to each other and their common Lord, in the glorious and everlasting kingdom, to which, with holy ambition, they aspired.

Of the arrival of Mr. Larned, January 22, Mr. Cornelius thus wrote:

"This morning I had the unspeakable satisfaction of greeting Mr. Larned, who has long been expected in this city, as one of its permanent laborers. The people were anxiously waiting. From the reports they had received of that excellent young man, their expectations were very high; and, although I had never witnessed his public performances, I could not doubt the correctness of the opinion which has

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already been extensively formed of him. Though much fatigued, he consented to preach the lecture this evening. Bless the Lord, oh my soul, for condescending to grant to his Church so rich a blessing as she enjoys in this wonderful young man. The congregation was large and respectable; and notwithstanding their expectations were very high, they were far transcended. One single burst of approbation told at once the reception they gave to this new messenger. I rejoice that, in regard to correctness of sentiment, and elevation of piety, as well as the inimitable manner in which it was delivered, the discourse was such as every Calvinist, and every real Christian, must unhesitatingly approve. His text was, 'For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.' There can be no doubt but that the people of this city will gladly exert themselves to settle Mr. Larned. I felt great pleasure in introducing him to a large circle of worthy and respectable citizens, who were present. Though I am unable to continue permanently in this place, yet I trust my having arrived several weeks previously to Mr. Larned, has been of one advantage, if no other, that of preparing the way for his regular labors."

Mr. Cornelius left New-Orleans, on his return to New-England, on the second of April, 1818. He had won the esteem of all classes, and the gratitude of the afflicted, the orphan, the sick, and the imprisoned, who had been relieved or comforted by his ministrations, followed him. On the morning of his departure Mr. Larned tendered to him, in the name of himself and a few other individuals, a gold watch, as an evidence that his services were appreciated, and that

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his mission of piety and mercy would never be forgotten.*

The theatre upon which Mr. Larned had now entered was favorable to the full developement of his high character. He was in the dawn of his manhood, in fine health, amidst a people warm-hearted, honorable, and generous, ardent, as their own sunny clime, quick to recognize and appreciate genius and eloquence, and to extend to its possessor the most delicate attentions and liberal support. He felt himself sustained also by a strong sense of duty, of the dignity of his profession,

* The following notes were exchanged on this occasion:

"NEW-ORLEANS, 2nd April, 1818.

"Rev. E. Cornelius:

"My dear Christian brother and friend,—From a few individuals of my congregation, associated with myself, be good enough to accept the accompanying watch—not as a compensation for your arduous labors and extensive usefulness in this city, but an indication of the warm recollections of yourself and your services, which you will leave behind, on your departure. May the God of peace and consolation bless you, and make you a shining ornament in His church.

"Most sincerely and affectionately, I remain your friend and brother in Christ, SYLVESTER LARNED."

[*Reply.*]

"NEW-ORLEANS, April 2, 1818.

"Rev. Sylvester Larned:

"My very dear brother,—With the highest pleasure I acknowledge the receipt of your note of this inst., with the accompanying present of a gold watch. Suffer me to say, that a memorial of regard so valuable in itself, is rendered doubly more so by a recollection of the generous donors. From you, my dear brother, I needed no higher token of regard, than you have a hundred times before given; and while I acknowledge this additional evidence of your affection, I must beg you to express to the donors associated with yourself, the warm sense I entertain of their gratitude and affection. May God bless you and the dear people of your charge with the richest of his bounties. Such will ever be the prayer of your brother, E. CORNELIUS."

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of the moral grandeur of Christianity, of the presence and all-governing providence of God. But the cultivation of his private affections, and strict regard to the claims of friendship, were a part of his religion, and never long neglected amidst the pressure of public responsibilities and engagements. Addressing his sister, April 8th, 1818, he thus speaks of himself and the great object he sought and expected to accomplish :

"Left, as I now am, alone, in the discharge of the severe and arduous duties which devolve on a Christian minister in such a city as this, you will easily excuse the infrequency of my communications, especially when you are told that to Martha, Harriet and Sylvia, I write equally often with your own dear self, and no oftener. To accomplish the erection of another church in a place where there is very little religion, is a task of prodigious magnitude; and I sometimes feel compelled to sacrifice, in some degree, the regularity of my correspondence with my friends to the numerous professional calls which occupy my attention. Of one thing, J——, you may rest assured,—that wherever I go, under whatever climate my lot may be cast, or to whatever trials that lot may assign me, I shall never cease to love you, and the dear husband of your bosom, with unabated and inextinguishable affection. The climate thus far has been indeed most delightful in this city. During the month of March we were accustomed to those little rarities of the vegetable world, which, in the eastern states, you prize so highly even at a much later period. The orange-trees are in charming bloom—one of them stands loaded with fruit, just before my window. Along the coast the ride is truly enchanting—every thing is in bloom—all Nature dressed in the habiliments of gaiety, and the infinite variety of birds constantly regaling the ear with their melody. As to the

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church, our prospects are highly flattering. The sum of $16,000 is already subscribed, and is increasing every day, to begin the edifice. The people have generously allowed me $4000 per annum, as a regular salary, and all that is comfortable and convenient I have now the means of obtaining. The field for usefulness in New-Orleans is literally boundless. I bless God for having directed my steps here. As to the climate, except during the prevalence of the yellow fever, the amount of public health is not surpassed in any American city whatever.

"Why, if merchants will come here, bring their families, and live for years, for the acquisition of wealth, is it impossible for the herald of Jesus Christ to encounter the same hazards, where his object is one of so much superior importance? Let it never be said,—let a minister blush who would see himself outdone in activity and enterprise, by the men of the world. After all, J——, it is of little consequence where we live, so we but cherish a hope in Christ, and be sure of an everlasting home in His Kingdom. Never did I feel this so deeply as since our dear father has left us, as if to warn his children of their departure. I often bear you both, and all my other friends, to the throne of mercy, and pray that you may be prepared for your last great change. How trifling and transitory is this world,—like man, 'it cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down,—it vanisheth also as a shadow, and where is it?' Should God be pleased to further my plans, I shall see you in July."

In a long letter, dated the 25th of April, addressed to Dr. Cornelius at Knoxville, (Tennessee,) he details in a light and easy style, several incidents and events which had occurred among his acquaintances and friends:

"You need not again be told how lonely and hermit-like I

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have felt since the 2nd of the month. Depend upon it, the assurances which you so liberally avow of affection and interest, are reciprocated to the *fingers' ends*. But I am only wasting the paper in telling you what you already know. Col. T. came in yesterday's boat, from N. He is apparently a pious and intelligent man, and, by-the by, like a good many others, much attached to a certain man, to whom I used to give the name of the 'Centurion.'"

In reference to the amount raised by Dr. Cornelius, at Natchez, for the cause of Missions, he observes:

"One thousand six hundred and twenty dollars! You astonish me. I most sincerely rejoice in your success, and can only say, you bid fair to get the name of the *irresistible*. The Church project goes on well; a contract is pending with the incipient architects, and the foundation is to be commenced next week! By my request, the trustees have furnished me with a power of attorney, for purchasing on their security, to the amount of $20,000, and I am to proceed in one fortnight to New-York, to send out half a million of brick and other articles immediately, so that the edifice may be sufficiently advanced in January next, to warrant a sale of the pews. You will see the policy of this proceeding—'to strike while the iron is hot' is a good rule, especially in this case; for you know if the pews are not sold the next winter, they will not sell favorably till the following winter, as people have generally very little of the buying humor, in any thing, during the warm season."

Alluding to intelligence he had received, that a call might be addressed to him by the Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, he remarks:

"Whatever may be the result, you may rest assured, that were I offered the Bishopric of Creation, I would not at this time leave New-Orleans."

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Speaking of an esteemed female friend, much afflicted and in feeble health, he observes:

"I pray God she may recover. Her mind is tender and solemn on the subject of religion. She often speaks of you, and like everybody else who ever knew you, remembers and loves, and respects you. Were I a little more jealous than I am, I might find in myself to use the idea of Shakspeare, that green and grovelling worm that feeds upon itself. But I confess, if I am doomed to no other suffering than that of hearing your praises, I shall be a very happy man. Now what else have I to say? You see that I have had the vanity to take a second start, as if I had something of interest to communicate. Since you left, if you will allow me to speak bluntly, I have preached some good sermons, and some, that, as the old woman said, were *extrornary ornary*.* The church in the afternoon is very much crowded—so much, that last Sabbath the doors and windows were filled inside and outside. O my dear Cornelius, I know what a solemn responsibility is upon me, and I pray God to enable me to discharge it. Pray for me—I pray for you, and surely we may hold communion with God, if not with each other. May the Lord Jesus give you the very richest of his blessings, both here and for ever. Let me hear from you often—direct to New-York."

On the 19th of June, 1818, he was once more, and on his last visit, at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, amid the congratulations and endearments of home. Mr. Cor-

* Mr. Larned very seldom alludes to himself or his performances. His great popularity appears little to have affected him; and nothing like memoranda or a diary, of his public duties, or more private thoughts, is to be found among his papers. Modest and unostentatious, while he delighted to do justice to the merits of others, he was ever disposed to conceal his own.

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nelius was still in Tennessee. Mr. Larned wrote to him at Knoxville, expressing joy that he had advanced so far on his journey, and at the prospect of soon meeting him in New-England:

"I anticipate!" he exclaims, "What a selfish remark—thousands anticipate. It really does my soul good to be asked wherever I go, about Mr. Cornelius. Mr. D——told me in New-York that he had a call for you from Middletown, Connecticut. I sometimes almost regret that I am not a layman, so as to sit under your preaching."

To the same, on the 16th of August, from the same place, he wrote:

"I unfortunately missed seeing you on the morning which saw me leaving New-York. Among many other regrets which this disappointment occasioned me, it was by no means the least that we should not have entered into a mutual arrangement for our future correspondence."

He then mentions his visit to New-Haven and Litchfield, and relates an anecdote of his interview with a venerable and somewhat eccentric man, Mr. C., in the latter town, who was ignorant of his characrer, and with whom he dined.

"Among other topics," he observes, "of discussion, Mr. Cornelius came on the carpet, and the following conversation ensued:

"*C.*—You say you are from New-Orleans. Did you ever know a Mr. Cornelius, a missionary there? And what do you think of him?

"*L.*—I have known him. I think he is a fine man, but he preaches pretty hard doctrine.

"*C.*—Just right, I presume. I know him; he is the

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flower of this part of the country. He is a revival minister.

"*L.*—But, sir, do you believe in revivals?

"*C.*—Yes, as much as I do in a God. Don't you?

"*L.*—Why, I never was in one, but am apt to think there is a good deal of enthusiasm attending them generally.

"*C.*—Well, sir, let me tell you they are a blessed thing. I hope you are not beyond the reach of mercy; and I do hope that when you next hear of a revival, you will go to it, and that the Spirit may awaken you and pardon your sins.

"I thanked him for his good advice and left him."

So diligently and resolutely was Mr. Larned engaged in completing the arrangements and purchases for his church, and so intent on arriving in New-Orleans before the drafts issued by him on his trustees should become due, that he denied himself the pleasure of attending, at Andover, the wedding of his friend Mr. Cornelius, to which he was earnestly invited. To the lady interested, he apologised by a note written in that style of courtesy which ever adorned all his actions in social life, and which, having explained the reasons for his early departure, concluded with an expression of "ardent solicitude for her present and eternal happiness."

He arrived in New-Orleans on the 21st of December, and the next day commenced a letter to Mr. Cornelius in the following words:

"My dear, my ever dear brother,—

"Whose name can so forcibly or so properly be recalled to my mind as your own, standing as I once more do on

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the theatre of our common labors during the past year? Whose name, I ought rather to ask, is calculated, so emphatically, to awaken all the recollections of friendship, all the feelings of gratitude, and all the sympathies of Christian love? But think not that in my poor heart alone you have found a remembrance—never will the dear people of my charge forget you—never will you cease to be beloved and esteemed in New-Orleans."

He then mentions the trying delay he had experienced in his journey, in consequence of the low water in the western rivers,—that, with about thirty others long detained in Kentucky like himself, he had chartered a boat, and with extreme difficulty accomplished the voyage from Louisville in twenty-three days. Certain rumors, circulated during his absence, to his disadvantage, his presence at once dispersed. His contracts were approved, and his drafts promptly paid. The City Council had given two lots to the church, worth $6000.

The enterprise so near his heart was moving forward, and all difficulties vanishing away. New-Orleans was thronged. Sixty thousand persons were supposed to be then in the city, six hundred having arrived the preceding week, and the number was daily increasing. "Don't be so happy at home," he finally writes, "as to forget me. Depend on it, when I forget you, my right hand will forget her cunning, though it never had but little."

To his friend, Mr. Post, he stated, in a letter of the 23rd, the progress of his enterprise, and congratulated him on the success which he was informed had attended his preaching. Of some special attention to

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religion under the ministry of his friend, he thus speaks:

"Surely in this, if in any thing, you have reason to rejoice. It is a precious seal to your ministry. It is almost a sensible demonstration that the Lord has called you into His vineyard—that you have not run without being sent. I have sometimes thought the feelings of a man thus honored and distinguished must be more delightful than any this side of heaven, when, to the triumph of seeing immortal souls rescued from their captivity, is added the inexpressible joy, of contributing successfully, himself, to their emancipation. I can tell you no such animating news from this region of death. Externally, every thing is flourishing and fair—but not a single *look* like a general revival has cheered my heart; and yet, if I know that heart, I strive to preach the truth. I would not willingly withhold, or abridge, or embellish it for any conceivable consideration. Pray for me, pray for New-Orleans!"

Among those in New-York, who had become greatly interested in Mr. Larned personally, as well as in the establishment of his church, and to whose generous aid he was largely indebted, was a young gentleman since distinguished for enterprise and success in business, and for contributions to objects of public utility. It may be inferred from the correspondence before us, that, in his own judgment, at least, he was not at this time religious, and it is for the future to reveal, how far the suggestions and influence of Mr. Larned contributed to form his character, and to plant within his bosom those sentiments of piety and beneficence which alone can light up the last hours of life with immortal hopes. An almost intuitive percep-

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tion of the dispositions and motives of men, and a delicate and universal sympathy with the varied workings of the soul at the different seasons, and in the various conditions of our being, enabled Mr. Larned to teach and guide, kindly and effectually, the unsettled and agitated mind. He respected and loved all that was amiable and generous in our nature, and well knew that often a single act of justice towards it, is better than a sermon, a hint more powerful than an argument,—that an encouraging smile, or a word fitly spoken, or one bright deed of virtue, works almost magically upon cheerless and reluctant hearts. The following extracts from his letters to this gentleman show how pertinently, and yet with what discretion, he wrought his religious sentiments and instructions into a correspondence with those who might cherish no heartfelt attachment to religious truth. Having mentioned his delay in Kentucky, and the reports which had been circulated to his discredit during his absence, he remarks, under date of the 12th of January:

"Amidst all this discouragement, however, it gave me great pleasure to hear that my friends in the eastward, and yourself in particular, had not found your confidence abused. The first question which escaped my lips on striking the Levee, was, whether my drafts were paid, and it relieved me from anxiety, at the same time it stimulated my efforts, to be answered in the affirmative. You recollect the contract on my part stipulated the payment of $7000 to ——— on his arrival; not one dollar of the same did I find in readiness. I immediately assembled my trustees, and held a 'council of war.' With the exertions we made, accompanied by the Divine blessing, our $7000 were raised

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and our fears quieted. You may smile at the mention of a Divine blessing. Now I do not believe in that kind of particular Providence which supposes an interference with the machinery of events; but I do most firmly believe that God causes the adjustments, and relations, and harmonies of his Providence to meet at certain points, for certain purposes; and I am deliberately convinced, that such has been the fact, in the very case, in allusion. This is no enthusiasm. Everybody admits the principle on a great scale. When a nation is delivered or destroyed,—when an empire is preserved or laid in ruins,—no man objects to acknowledging the finger of the Deity. Why then, let me ask, should I be forbidden the same reasoning about a church in New-Orleans? But I will talk of something else. The corner-stone of our building was laid on the memorable anniversary of the 8th of January. The ceremonies were very interesting—the crowd prodigious. I most sincerely pray that the day may be the era of moral renovation in this valley of spiritual death."

Doubtless in reference to some remark of this gentleman, he adds:

"No, ——; God forbid that I should fill up any blank with the words 'lost for ever,' where your name is at the bottom. I know not that I shall ever see you more in this world, but this I know, were you the Infidel of 80, instead of the almost Christian of 35, I should not surrender the precious hope of seeing you a child of the love of God. If I die before you, (*and mark my words*, I probably shall,) one of the last prayers that will breathe from my lips shall be, that you may be saved. Do not forget to write me often."

In his next, of the 6th of April, he says:

"I cannot avoid saying, once for all, that I consider you

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as the immediate instrument of building our church. To express my personal acknowledgments would be an old story; for the rest, let me say, that although you are devoted to making money, you will find, when you come to die, that all you can call your own, will be, just what you have done towards advancing the kingdom of Christ. I can recompense your *goodness*—no, not so much that, perhaps—but your enlarged and liberal views, only by hoping and praying that you may possess that religion in your heart and for eternity, which you have been made the means in this case of conspicuously promoting. Our church, of which you inquire, is almost completed. Lord has acted the gentleman and the architect to our full satisfaction. I do not believe there is a handsomer building of the kind in the United States. The project has met opposition, and so does, and ever will, any thing signally good. But opposition has been silenced. The City Council the other day lent us $10,000; and all our troubles, so far as we can see, are surmounted. I wish you could come here a little while and see us. Why can't you? In the fall, it will be a pleasant excursion to explore the western country, and terminate your tour with New-Orleans. If there is a living soul on earth I would rejoice to see, it is yourself. R—— never will come until insurance can be effected from thunder and lightning, of which we have a great abundance, and of a *superior* kind here. * * * S—— is here, and I see him *all* the time, I had liked to have said —he is what we Christians call a *precious man*. Do you wish to know how New-Orleans is coming on in a Christian sense? I think much solemnity is apparent. Several deaths have recently occurred, and I hope they have preached better than ever I did. I think a *very* little of visiting New-York during the summer, but perhaps I shall visit eternity first. And why should I dread it? I want to have it decided what is coming when this pitiful world is gone."

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On the fourth of July his church was dedicated, and he preached to a crowded and deeply interested audience with emotions of delight and thanksgiving, and in his most impressive manner. In allusion to his text, he observed, "I trust God was in the midst of his temple."* The architecture of the building was all he could desire; pews to the value of 17 to $18,000 were immediately sold, and amidst the sympathies and cordialities of an affectionate and increasing people, and the warm expressions of confidence and respect from the citizens generally of New-Orleans, he engaged with all the animation and vigor of his nature in the discharge of his pastoral duties. Nor were his views limited to these duties. In the character, improvement, and rising institutions of the city, he evinced a generous concern. Affliction never appealed to him in vain. When the circumstances of New-Orleans at that time are considered, we may imagine how many eyes were turned towards him, how many imploring hands stretched out to him for relief. The widow, the orphan, the sick and friendless seaman, the destitute stranger, the tenant of the hospital, the prisoner chained in his dungeon, and the murderer under sentence of death, all found in him a friend. He was economical of time, and for this reason, as well as from his conscious abilities for influence in society, he frequently invited gentlemen to breakfast or dine with him, without regard to the peculiarities of their religious creeds. On one occasion, at least, (probably on others,) the whole body of the Catholic clergy of the city partici-

* See Sermon: "We have thought of thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple."

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pated in the hospitalities of his table. His finely susceptible and well-attempered constitution disposed him to partake of innocent enjoyments, and all his feelings and habits to delight in the rational gratification of his fellow-men; and while his presence never failed to enliven the social hour, and to open the sparkling fountains of joy in the hearts of others, a discerning eye might detect his ruling motive, and that he was ever mindful of the dignity and responsibility of his profession.

If a facetious remark of Sir Thomas More, when about to die on the scaffold, has not diminished our veneration for his piety, because a vein of wit run through his entire nature, it may be pardoned to Larned, that in the buoyancy of youthful health and spirits, his playful and lively fancy broke out occasionally among his associates, to relieve more serious thought, and give an Attic grace and brilliancy to conversation.* Deep springs of fresh and joyous humor were in him,

* Had Mr. Larned entered the legal profession, or engaged in political life, the following lines of Moore, applied to Sheridan, might not less truly have been applied to him:

"Whose mind was an essence compounded with art,
From the finest and best of other men's powers;
Who ruled like a wizard the world of the heart,
And could call up its sunshine or draw down its showers.

"Whose humor, as gay as the fire-fly's light,
Played round every subject, and shone as it played;
Whose wit in the contest, as gentle as bright,
Never carried a heart-stain away on its blade.

"Whose eloquence brightening whatever it tried,
Whether reason or fancy, the gay or the grave,
Was as rapid, as deep, and as brilliant a tide
As ever bore freedom aloft on its wave."

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and needed, like his eloquence, but occasion, to gush forth.

It has been evident from various letters, that he realised not only the importance but peril of his station, and in all his plans and calculations felt their great uncertainty, and the probability of an early death. The fame of his talents and eloquence had travelled through the Union, and invitation after invitation, from wealthy churches, enforced by the appeals of private friendship, urged his retreat from the exposures of his position. But he was above selfishness, and a stranger to fear. He tenderly reciprocated the affections of his people; he appreciated their noble exertions; his sense of honor, and that voice to him more powerful and persuasive than all beside, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," disposed him to decline every call, and stand in what he deemed his appointed field of service, obedient, and prepared for every event. Of what consequence when that "great night," in which no man can work, and which must involve all, should come over him, provided his trimmed and burning lamp showed him waiting for his Lord, prepared to render his account, and to enter into glory?

In several notices of Mr. Larned, published since his death, his early pulpit eloquence is represented as the product rather of imagination and passion than of reason. Accordingly, its effect is described as more agreeable than useful; his hearers were thrown into "a delirium of feeling,"—pleased, perhaps, with their own unsanctified sensibilities, admiring the preacher and his extraordinary gifts, enraptured with his elocution and action, weeping at the scenes he described, or at his pathetic appeals, yet retiring as from some tragic

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exhibition, the same in character and unreformed in life. It is said that he remarked, not long before his death, to a friend, "I see, to be sure, my people all in tears, and it seems very solemn, but the next day I may meet them, and they swear before my face;" and that, "disgusted" with the manner in which he had preached, he resolved to alter his method, and more directly seek to arouse the conscience, and permanently affect the heart. In this, we believe, injustice is done to Mr. Larned: that the secret of his power is mistaken. His discourses from the first were distinguished by simplicity, continuity, directness, and force of reasoning, by abstinence from all that was irrelevant or superfluous, and more than all, perhaps, by a warm and practical application to the conscience, heart, and life. His thoughts came home to "men's business and bosoms," and if higher merit belongs to his later than to his earlier productions, it is but the very natural result of his advancement in religion and knowledge of mankind, and the increased resources and self-discipline of his rich and original mind.

On the 8th of September, 1817, he wrote to his friend, Mr. Post, from St. Francisville, Louisiana, congratulating him on his settlement in Washington, encouraging him in his arduous work, and invoking upon him and his labors the blessing of Almighty God.

"You ask," he continues, "if I have any of the discouragements enumerated in your letter, attending my own ministry. I need answer this question but by merely reminding you of the character of all this southern section of country. God, however, has carried me safely through all external trials, and given me prosperity. Our church is completed, the architect paid, and the congregation increasing in numbers. I

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think, also, much solemnity prevails among them. Were my own heart as it should be, I think I should be perfectly happy. But no, I cannot say that. The yellow fever has begun the work of death once more in New-Orleans, and every thing is consternation and dismay. My dear Post, you never knew, God grant you never may know, the feelings which now wring my heart. Away from the most affectionate people, forbidden by them to return—and learning by every mail that some new victim has fallen before the pestilence. I have only one consolation to my bleeding and anxious heart, and that is, 'The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.'"

In a note to Mr. Cornelius, on the 12th of December, he announced his marriage to Miss Sarah Wyer, from Newburyport, Mass. As this highly accomplished and excellent lady has long since gone to those blessed mansions where we doubt not her husband awaited her arrival, there may be no impropriety in quoting the following allusion to this happy union, from a letter to the same gentleman, dated New-Orleans, January 25th, 1820:

"After all, you see I have married the pretty Miss Wyer, of Newburyport. What she was on the score of religion when she lived at the eastward, I cannot say; but since the death of her mother here, she has been deeply impressed, and, long before I paid her my visits, had she formed the design of coming to the table of her crucified Saviour. I think, my friend, if you knew, you would love her, not for her beauty, nor her visible attractions of any kind, but for her temper, amiable at any time, and sweetened and sanctified, I hope, by divine grace. But I will drop this foolish subject of praising a wife; for let me talk forever, you would still

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think, as the French say, that the *nonpareil du monde* is your own charming Mary."

No one, we think, can peruse without emotion the extract we now give, from the same letter, correcting an injurious report which had been circulated at the north, and explaining the causes of his absence from his people during a part of the summer and autumn of 1819. It doubtless supplies the key to his purpose, (alas! too sternly executed,) of exposing his life to all hazards in future, rather than allow a stain, even by the uncandid or unjust, to be cast upon his courage and fidelity as a Christian minister.

"You ask me what has become of me during the summer. I will answer your inquiries, for I have heard of ——— reporting that my brother was sick here of the yellow fever, and that the fear of taking it deterred me from going to visit him but once during a long sickness. In this ——— was entirely mistaken, and I must confess I was sorry to hear that such a man had even believed, much more that he had circulated, such a rumor. My brother left New-Orleans in May, and has not been sick, nor have I seen him since. I staid here until the 10th of August, determined not to move a step, if there should be sickness. The city was then perfectly healthy. I went up the river to attend the Presbytery. While there, the sickness commenced in New-Orleans, and before I was ready to come back, *fourteen* letters reached me, all forbidding my return from the air of the country into that of the town. Five of these letters were from physicians, and seven from my trustees. I complied with these instructions, and staid in St. Francisville. Death and havoc reigned there more than any where else. We buried 170 people from this sparse population. My friend Benoist, with whom I

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staid, died in my arms, and gladly would I have come to New-Orleans, but that my friends forbade me in the most solemn and positive terms. Such another summer, Cornelius, I could not survive. But I will stop. You know my story, and will appreciate my motives."

It was stated in a short but pertinent article, in memory of Mr. Larned, printed soon after his decease, that, "by the terms of his settlement, he was authorized to be absent during the summer months—a stipulation entered into with immediate reference to the dangerous nature of the climate." If such were the fact, it is alike remarkable and characteristic, that he makes no allusion to it in this, or any, of his letters. He would neither avail himself of his liberty, nor allege its existence for his vindication. It has been said, that the "rigid demands of his congregation constrained him to risk his life during the summer of 1820 in the city." We find no evidence of such demands, and feel assured, that, while some of his congregation doubtless approved, all saw that a generous sympathy with those in danger, a noble and self-sacrificing concern for the interests of his church and the glory of his Saviour, originated his determination to remain and abide all consequences.

About the same date he addressed a letter to Mr. Post, from which we select a few sentences:

"I hear from you often through others, and rejoice that your praise is in the churches. Believe me, if there be a person living who sincerely and cordially exults in your prosperity, that person is your humble servant. But why do you complain so much of the languor and deadness of your congregation? Do you think you are alone in your

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trials? You undoubtedly remember Melancthon's remark about the strength of old Adam, and I trust it will enter into your practical hopes and calculations. Of my affairs I can tell you nothing new or surprising. The congregation increases; the city is gradually becoming reformed, and externally there is every indication I could ask. In spiritual things, we make a visible, though tardy progress. During the last sermon I preached, which referred to the sinfulness of the heart, and in which I made no appeal to the feelings, several appeared affected by the naked truth goading their consciences. This with you would be little, very little, but with me it is much. I have reason, also, to believe that since my residence here I have been made the instrument of seven or eight hopeful conversions, and perhaps twice or thrice that number of serious convictions, which have remained. But it is a dry and thirsty land."

During this closing period of life, the preaching of Mr. Larned assumed a character of peculiarly earnest simplicity, spirituality, and power; and from the topics chosen, and the manner in which they were discussed, it is evident that his mind was impressed in an unusual degree, with the grandeur of Christian truth, and of his exposure to a sudden transition from this twilight region of Faith, to the surpassing and unchanging scenes of eternity.

The following paper is found among his manuscripts:

"NEW-ORLEANS, 3d of July, 1820.

"A year has fled since my church was dedicated to the service of Almighty God. O how much reason have I for humility, abasement, and sorrow! May God forgive me graciously, and strengthen me in the resolutions I now desire to make, viz:

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"1st. I will try from this time to be more punctual and fervent in secret as well as in family prayer.

"2d. I will try to give up, both in fact and in appearance, my besetting levity of character and disposition.

"3d. I will try to study more in my profession, and to preach better.

"4th. I will try to bring myself, *upon the whole*, nearer every day to the proper deportment of a serious Christian.

"May the Lord Jesus help me in my effort, for his name's sake. Amen. SYLVESTER LARNED."

As the human soul is open to the Eternal Spirit, and his providence ever over the faithful for good, is it irrational to suppose that in their near approach to the grave, there may be some extraordinary communings with the world invisible, some reflecting down into its depths, of the light and beauty of those things inconceivable to others, and which, for the most devout, it is not lawful to utter. The path of the just is like the morning light, shining more and more unto the perfect day, and may we not anticipate upon the face of a disciple about to depart, some beams of the everlasting light, and in his heart, the experience of St. Paul, enabling him to cry out, "I am ready to be offered." Thus, after the surface of the lake has been ruffled by the dark and appalling wings of the storm, and mingled with the impurities of earth, have we seen the sun suddenly break forth with undimmed brightness, the rocks, and trees, and flowers reposing their freshness and beauty in its still waters, and clearly mirrored on their bosom the whole serenity and magnificence of heaven.

Certain it is, that the gentle and pious affections of Mr. Larned were particularly active at this season, and

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numerous and high duties discharged with constant watchfulness and inflexible resolution.

To one of his earliest friends, the Rev. Remembrance Chamberlain, he wrote under date of May 12th:

"Your kind and affectionate letter has, I assure you, conferred, like all your letters, a most sincere pleasure. To hear from you is in some respects a happiness peculiar to itself. It calls up a thousand circumstances and recollections which *we* alone can appreciate. It brings forcibly to mind the hour when the inquiry first trembled on my lips, 'What must I do to be saved?' When the injudicious zeal of —— almost curbed my desire to be a Christian, and when the hand of brotherly encouragement was by you extended, to lead my stumbling feet upon the green pastures of divine grace. Such associations I love to have recalled, for they not only impart that melancholy joy which the remembrance of departed scenes inspires, but they throw me upon my knees in the dust, by suggesting the unworthy use I have made of my many blessings. My dear, dear brother, I rejoice more than I can tell you, in the success which has thus far rewarded your labors. Nothing makes my heart bound with a purer delight than to hear of the welfare of my early friends—to hear that they are rising, and taking an elevated attitude upon their respective walks of life. Go on, and may Jacob's God go with you. I suppose you are near Lexington, (Ken.); if so, you will become acquainted with one of the loveliest women in that state, I mean Mrs. B——. Tell her I am compelled, in spite of myself, to love her. I say in spite of myself, for I have written and written again to herself, and to John, but no answer rewards my hopes. If you see J. B.,* gripe him by the hand for me. Remem-

* The late Dr. Breckenridge; the memorial of whose distinguished eloquence, as a minister, and various and arduous labors for the cause

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ber me cordially, if you please, to the little circle of my acquaintances in Kentucky, for I think of them often with great pleasure."

On the 15th of July, he announced, in a brief letter to Mr. Cornelius, the death of a mutual Christian friend, (Mrs. Brand,) a member of his church:

"'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' Ah, my dear friend, when you lose an ardent, and glowing, and praying Christian, you see others around you to supply the void; but I have lost the greatest pillar in my little church. God however is just, and I will not murmur. Last Sabbath was our communion; some of the Methodists joined us, and in all we had *forty-two*. This, though to you it would seem an inconsiderable number, is one which gladdens my heart, and enlivens in some degree my desponding hopes."

He then mentions nine new communicants, and adds:

"The season was the most solemn I have ever witnessed, rendered so especially by the death, during the previous week, of the lamented Mrs. Brand."

He speaks of several others, in regard to whom he indulged hopes that they would belong to their number, and observes, "So you see we have a few drops occasionally descending on this thirsty hill of Zion."

The following is his last letter to Mr. Cornelius:

"New-Orleans, 16th August, 1820.

"My dear Cornelius,—I have waited long but in vain,

of Christ and the good of man, abides in the hearts of thousands, in nearly every portion of the Union."

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for a letter bearing the post-mark of Salem. Do not suppose that I mean to censure, for none better than myself can appreciate the excuse which your numerous and arduous avocations furnish. Let me merely add, lest you forget it, that to hear from you gives me at all times the purest pleasure, and especially in our dreary summers. My design in writing at this time is to give you a correct idea of the health of New-Orleans. Cases of yellow fever have occurred—say half a dozen deaths, and twice or thrice that number of recoveries. Upon this statement you may depend, and should a merciful Providence spare my life, I shall try to keep you regularly advised on this subject. None of your friends have fallen, or are sick: in short, the city is universally healthy, and we cherish the hope of escaping the present season, the havoc we witnessed in the last. Be good enough to write when you conveniently can. Our regards to Mrs. C., and believe me as ever,

SYLVESTER LARNED."

Mr. Cornelius replied to the epistle of the 15th of July on the 18th of August, in the spirit of exalted friendship, and fidelity to their common Lord. Having mentioned, in apology for his long silence, that for the three months previous he had been incessantly engaged in the service of the American Board of Foreign Missions, that he had travelled from Maine to Pennsylvania, and preached nearly every day, he said:

"This afternoon your last of the 15th ult. arrived, and awakened such feelings, that although in the midst of a laborious preparation for the Sabbath, I resolved immediately to write something. And first of all, suffer me to express my deep sympathy with you in all your cares, and labors, and trials. I know they must all be great, and when I think

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of you as bearing the heat and burthen of the day, and bearing them alone, my heart is pained for you."

Having alluded to the illness of Mrs. Larned, he continues:

"My heart bleeds for you in all these trials, and I pray God you will consider each affliction, by itself, a messenger of good. I have never had a doubt, that if you were a child of God, you would be obliged to make your way to Heaven through tribulation. The exhortation of Paul is full of meaning, 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.' And why not rejoice if God intends by such visitations to alienate our affections from the world—to make us better men and better ministers. Your dear wife's health, I doubt not, will be watched over with the care of a most affectionate and solicitous husband. For her sake, if not for your own, I sincerely desire, you will not continue in the city during the sickly season. Precaution is as much our duty as preaching, nor can we be justified in destroying or hazarding too often, that health on which our whole usefulness depends. The death of Mrs. Brand, I can easily conceive, must be a heavy stroke; it is to me at this distance, and must be far more so to you, under the peculiar circumstances of your church. While reading it, a remark occurred to me often mentioned by Dr. Worcester, in regard to his own experience, that whenever he had attempted to lean upon any individual in his church or congregation, as a chief support, God, in some way or other, would remove him; and here again, it may be, that God designs you should more earnestly and confidently *look upward*. But, in the midst of your trials, you certainly are not without your encouragements. I say it with much assurance. Rarely has any young minister been permitted to do so much, in so short a time,

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for the interests of Christ's church; and when you are dead, much precious seed will, doubtless, spring up to reward your greatest toils and self-denials. And what is our life? How soon gone! Once arrived in Heaven, how shall we rejoice in having made any sacrifice, however great, for the sake of bringing many souls to participate in the endless bliss of that glorious state. But you need not my words to encourage you. The word of the everliving God is your hope and dependence."*

It is presumed Mr. Larned was never permitted to read these words of piety and affection, and he who penned them, little imagined, how to us they would seem like prophetic oracles, casting a symbolic significance towards eternity.

The terrible epidemic spread with rapidity, and assumed its most malignant aspect. Impelled by his natural humanity, and more by his Christian benevolence, Mr. Larned was unremitting in his attentions to all classes of the sick and dying, nor could friendless and afflicted strangers escape his observation, or find it necessary to solicit the assiduities of his kindness. His brother George was at the Bay of St. Louis. To him, seven days before his death, he addressed the following, his LAST LETTER:

"NEW-ORLEANS, 24th August, 1820.

"Dear George,—As Sarah writes by this opportunity, I shall confine myself to a very few words. The most I can

* In this, as in an earlier letter, Mr. Cornelius alludes to the fact, that during the previous summer, in a weekly meeting of clergymen for prayer, in Salem, he (Mr. Larned) and his great work had been constantly remembered, and that they would continue to invoke blessings upon him and his exertions.

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tell you, under the head of news, is, that several cases of fever have occurred since your departure; a large portion of which are now undecided. You will have heard by this time, that Peter V. Ogden is no more. The younger Inskeep and Sampson are extremely low, so much so, that both their tombs are built, though they may recover. Among the other sick, are, Major L——, young M. C., T—— W—— the lawyer, Miss M——, Mrs. and Miss S——, H—— of Baltimore, B—— of Philadelphia, and others, whom you would not be likely to know. Of these cases I am not sufficiently informed to speak positively, except that the names underscored are said to be recovering. You ask about my health. Through the mercy of Providence, I am well, as is Sarah. My present design is, to remain in town. I throw myself into the hands of a wise God, and hope for grace to meet all his allotments. Sure I am, that if he choose to take me from the world the present season, I have no word of objection or demur to utter. I rejoice that you are at the Bay. Stay there till health is entirely restored in town. You have had three letters, all of which I detain. One, by the way, I have answered. Remember me to, &c. Very cordially and truly, &c.

SYLVESTER LARNED."

Thus calm, collected, confiding in the wisdom and will of his God, stood this young minister, amid the gloom and ravages of that fearful pestilence, knowing in whom he had believed, and prepared to enter at any moment the dark portals of death, at the word of his all-conquering Leader. He remembered his Cross, and his resurrection, and that he dieth no more, and that he hath ascended to prepare mansions for his disciples, that they may be forever with him and behold his glory, the glory he had with the Father before the

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world was. On the 27th of August, he appeared, for the *last time*, in that church which had been erected mainly through his exertions, and mingled his tears with those of his afflicted flock, while addressing to them the following brief and affectionate discourse:*

THE LAST SERMON OF MR. LARNED.

"Philippians i., 21.—'To me to live is Christ; and to die is gain.'

"To a sentiment like this, my hearers, what can we conceive superior in dignity of thought, or loftiness of feeling? How majestic does he appear who can look with so triumphant an emotion upon the grave,—and that too, not in the sternness of philosophy, nor the torpor of fatalism, but simply in the meek and confiding hope of salvation by Jesus Christ! In the present case, also, there are some *facts* which render the spectacle still more illustrious. When St. Paul uttered the language of our text, he was a prisoner at Rome. The terrible Nero had hunted long and eagerly for the aged saint, till at last the apostle was seized and conducted to that imperial monster, who had so often feasted on the blood and tears of the Church. Here it was that the godly old man—chained to a soldier, to prevent his escape, uncertain what day might prove his last, and listening, at every sound, for the fearful tread of the executioner,—here it was, under circumstances which might have appalled the stoutest heart, that he exclaimed, more like a conqueror than a captive,

'To me to live is Christ; and to die is gain.'

Now what, my hearers, is life? It comprises, you well know, two leading ideas—activity and enjoyment. Every man has some great object upon which his activities are

* A gentleman present wrote: "The whole of his discourse was solemn, and he himself was unusually affected by the considerations he presented to his hearers; and as he concluded, he wept."

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more awake than upon any other. Wealth to one, Beauty to a second, Fame to a third, and so on; and, I trust, experimental religion to a few, calls forth that paramount solicitude and exertion which show most decisively in what direction the main current of the feelings is set. By this rule, if you look at the apostle Paul, you may find out, at a glance, the real spring of his movements. His whole efforts were bent to the single aim of promoting Christianity, not only abroad, but in his own bosom—not alone in the display of its external embellishments, but in the urgency of its work upon the affections and thoughts. The same is true in regard to the idea of enjoyment. There is scarcely a man in a thousand who does not show to the eye of his acquaintances, and indeed to his own eye, if he be candid and impartial, the actual feelings by which he loves chiefly to be engrossed. The secret will come out. The votary of pleasure, of fashion, of gold, and, may I add, of the Saviour, are sure to betray the supremacy of their attachment to their separate objects of pursuit. By this rule, too, St. Paul appears in a character the most unequivocal. His enjoyments were in Christ. All his views of happiness appear to have centred on the one absorbing principle of union with Him, 'in whom,' to use his own words, 'tho' now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Well then did the great apostle of the Gentiles say, that 'To him to live was Christ.' But, my brethren, does not *his* language convey a sentiment of conviction and reproof to *you?* Could you adopt it, and assert that the Lord Jesus constitutes the primary object of your lives, either by making you supremely active in His service, or by making you supremely happy in His promises. These are inquiries which lie, depend upon it, at the very basis of personal religion. Easy as it may be to carry about us the semblance of a hope for eternity,

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the Bible declares that God looketh at the life, not simply in its visible conformities and observances, but in the entireness of its dedication to Jesus Christ. But the venerable Paul goes on to say, that '*to him to die was gain.*' How is this? How should a poor frail mortal, who had known only *one* world, feel a confidence so strong in approaching the untried scenes of *another?* The reason, my hearers, plainly was, that he had an interest in the Saviour's blood. This inspired his triumph, and having this, Death was to him, as it is to every believer, a subject of thanksgiving and praise. It released him from all his sorrows; and many a one have the children of God in walking through this vale of tears. The hand of God's bereavement, or the reverses of His Providence, break in upon their happiness so often, that, 'if, in this life only, they had hope in Christ, they were, of all men, most miserable.' And besides, in entering the grave, the Christian leaves his sins behind him; and I know of no one consideration more glorious or more animating to a renovated heart. Certain it is, that by just how much we are assimilated to the Redeemer, by just so much will the bare *danger* of violating his commandments, or incurring his displeasure, be to us a source of the most lively uneasiness and anxiety. And then, more than every thing else, the hour of death, however shrouded for the time in gloom, ushers the experimental believer into a better and a brighter world. To him it is that God has promised 'an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' The very moment life is gone, the certainty of Heaven comes home to him; and thus it happens that every one, rich or poor, bond or free, who can truly say, with the apostle, that 'to him to live is Christ, may say also with the same assurance, that 'to die is gain.' And here, my brethren, let me again inquire, if the sentiment of our text do not tacitly imply a reproach—or an expostulation to yourselves? In what sense

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is it that death, to you, would be 'gain'?—Death, which will stop you short in your pursuits, and lay you motionless and cold, beneath the lids of the coffin—death, which will put forever beyond your reach the offers of mercy—which will cut short the busy activities of the world, and dismiss you at once to the tribunal bar of the Omnipotent God. Justly indeed might St. Paul contemplate these things with joy; for he was prepared to put off his clayey tabernacle. But, to us, the question comes most impressively up, whether we have any evangelical and well-grounded reason to believe that Christ has been formed in us the hope of glory?

"Now, my hearers, in looking at the subject which has been briefly examined, I cannot repress a remark, adapted, I think, to the serious reality of our present circumstances. It is this: At all times a becoming preparation for eternity presents itself to us as a most desirable attainment—but now more than ever, for the simple reason that now the distance between time and eternity seems to be most solemnly short. You can all attest how suddenly a few weeks past have hurried some of our fellow-beings from health to the tomb. Do not, however, mistake my meaning,—do not think I say this with a design to alarm. By no means. Your own good sense will teach you, that at a moment like the present, composure and tranquillity, even without religion, ought carefully to be sought. But what I say is, have an interest in Jesus Christ. Then death will have no terrors, and the grave no victory. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved. Why will you put off the business of your immortal souls? Why will you rush forward with the infatuation of madness and the rashness of despair, when the arms of a compassionate Saviour are thrown open to welcome you with all your sins and all your fears? I entreat, and God grant you may remember the appeal—I entreat you to be

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up and doing—to work while it is called today, because the night cometh,—and how soon or suddenly we know not,—wherein no man can work."

By the exertions of this Sabbath he appeared to be much overcome, but complained of no indisposition until early the next morning, when he was seized with fever, which no medical skill or appliances could subdue; and on Thursday evening, the 31st of August, the very day on which he completed his twenty-fourth year, he resigned, in the full confidence of a blessed immortality, his soul to God.

"He evinced no alarm," (says Mrs. Larned, in her letter to Mr. Cornelius,) "when sensible that the yellow fever had seized upon him. After thirty-six hours, he abandoned all hope of recovery, though at that time no apprehension of danger was entertained by his friends. From the commencement of the disease, a most unnatural depression of spirits was evident, from which no effort could arouse him. When I have bent over him, using every possible exertion to restore some sign of wonted cheerfulness, he would look upon me with a fixedness and earnestness which seemed to say, call not my thoughts from the contemplation of that scene into which my spirit must soon enter. The expression of his face at those moments I can never forget, though my years be lengthened to the utmost bound of human existence,—the calmness and resignation of the Christian triumphing over the struggles of nature. He was too well acquainted with the nature of the disease, and marked its progress, and observed each unfavorable change, as it appeared. There was entire resignation and submission to his Maker's will, and a readiness to obey the summons, at whatever hour he might be called to depart. When all hope was annihilated, and the last fatal symptom appeared,

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he beheld it with the most perfect composure, and an unchanged countenance. Death had no terrors for him,—it came like a kind angel, to bear him to his Father's bosom; and when the heart that clung to him as to life itself, was bursting with unutterable anguish, he remained unmoved, for his heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord. His reason, except for a few short intervals, was continued to him bright and unimpaired to life's last hour. A few hours before his death, he took his leave of me, saying it was all right that we should be separated, and begged I might not come into the room again,—he had given up the world, and wished to shut out every object that might fix his thoughts upon it. We parted,—my beloved husband to join the blest above, and enter a blissful and enrapturing scene,—I to a world which no longer held a charm to entice me,—for the dearest tie that bound me to it was dissolved."

"In the last sad scene," says one of his most intelligent Christian friends, "that terminated his earthly labors and cares, the piety of his character, and the blessed and soul-sustaining influence of his religion, were exhibited with a convincing clearness and power. With what tenderness, tempered with resignation and joyful hope, he died, having thrown his manly arm around his youthful bride, and bid her farewell! While yet the strong impressions of such a parting wrung our hearts, an aged friend inquired concerning the state of his soul's hope for eternity. *He answered distinctly, 'All is well.'*

"When the power of speech was almost gone, the same bodily strength remained, and he desired a pen and ink. On its being placed before him, he wrote a few lines, but so imperfectly, that nothing was clearly visible but the blessed name of *Jesus Christ.* The last sands of his glass were fast falling, and the hour of his departure rapidly approach-

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ing. All our prayers and tears were evidently unavailing; and our brother, friend, and pastor beloved, was taking his leave, to enter joyfully upon a higher inheritance. We watched the last and parting struggles; they were short, and we wept because we felt that we were as sheep without a shepherd, but we wept not as those who have no hope.

"On the fourth day of his illness, in the evening, (the day which, on the Sabbath preceding, he had appointed as a day of humiliation, prayer, and thanksgiving, at which time he gave notice he should preach,) this valiant soldier of the Cross rested from his labors: and when we folded him in the garments of the dead, we thought how graceful still that calm and settled countenance, which, even in death, preserved its manly beauty.

"A fearful epidemic was prevailing in the city—death seemed to be borne to us upon every breeze—many hearts were sad for the dead, and despairing for themselves. In the morning, when the place for his sepulture was chosen, no bell tolled, to communicate the sad intelligence. At his church on that day we met, and with his remains before the pulpit, we, by weeping prayers, paid the last sad offices to him, who, four days before, had preached to us as if in prospect of an early grave, from those solemn and animating words, which well expressed the exhilarating and sustaining faith that he exercised towards God: '*To me to live is Christ; and to die is gain.*'"

His sudden decease threw deeper gloom upon the city which had derived inestimable benefits from his efforts and example, and whose admiring thousands had been at one time aroused, at another subdued by his eloquence, and responding sensations of grief were produced by intelligence of the sad event throughout the Union.

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"If ever," said one in a letter which appeared a few days after in New-York, "if ever this city was visited by a public calamity—ever sustained a loss which cannot be supplied, it is by his death. He formed a congregation, succeeded in building a church where it had been despaired of, and had warmly attached to him hearts, that, to ordinary attractions are perfectly insensible. His remains were carried to his church, where the Episcopal service was read over them by the Rev. Mr. Hull; and many a tear from many a rugged feature, showed how deeply they mourned him. He was, indeed, a man whom no person could know without loving; and taking for all in all, New-Orleans can never look upon his like again. He died on his birth-day, aged 24 years. On the same day of the last year, Mrs. Larned's mother died of the same disease; during the winter she lost a brother, in the prime of life; her child lived but to die; and now her husband (and such a husband too!) is gone. Can life possess any charm for such a victim of sorrow?"

While appropriate tributes of respect appeared in many of the newspapers of that day, some hearts there were, which felt the sundering, by his removal, of many of the strongest and tenderest ties that bound them to the world. On the Sabbath after the tidings were announced in Baltimore, Dr. Nevins, by the following words. gave utterance in the pulpit to his deep emotions:

"A rich and noble trophy hath death taken in him, the saddening news of whose departure has just reached us. I say nothing, because he needs not the breath of human eulogy to fan his spirit to its resting-place; for already it is hushed and happy upon the bosom of its God. But I allude to him, that I may answer a demand from this heart;

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met, I trust, by a demand from many hearts in this congregation,—that I may speak of him from this place, which he so loved and honored,—that I may leave with you my brief and feeble testimony. He was just going, after having completed his academical course, to give himself to the world; but the Almighty whispered in his heart. He heard, and went to the temple, and presenting himself before the altar, consecrated himself and his talents to God. God accepted the offering, and holy fire came down and animated him. When he came before the world, in spite of the urgency of his many solicitations, the charm of Christian society, the voice of friendship and of fame, more fascinating than all, entreating him to stay, he betook himself to the intrepid work of introducing the Gospel into that city of living and breathing death. He accomplished what none had dared to attempt, and was devising more, when, long ere he had reached the noon of his life, the summons came to demand the residue of the day. God said—it was enough—and he breathed out his great and gallant spirit to Him who gave it. This rich and valued specimen of man, around which his fellow-men used to gather, to look upon and admire, and which every one wished to call his own, its Maker has reclaimed for Himself, and keeps it in his cabinet of men made perfect.

"The testimony to his worth and greatness is in the strange and unheard-of fact, that the fall of a young man of twenty-four, has sent a shock of sorrow through the States, and awakened emotions of real grief where he was never seen nor heard. Scarcely has death ever stopped the beat of a warmer or more expanded heart, or quenched, so far as it could quench, the light of a more brilliant intellect. But it is all over. The music of his beseeching eloquence, winning souls to God, shall be heard no more. His absence shall help to wean many from the world. He was one of

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those few men whose death shall make us willing to die; and, in the general revelation, these eyes shall see him again in peace, these ears shall hear, this hand shall grasp the hand no longer chilled, and this heart shall again commingle and coalesce with the heart of him for whom it feels."

A plain white marble monument, upon which is inscribed his name, age, and the date of his death, with the text of his last discourse, was erected in 1836, in Lafayette Square, New-Orleans, and will long stand, we trust, emblematic of the simplicity and purity of his character—an enduring evidence, that though dead, he still lives, in the power of his example, the hearts of his people, and the undying love of the church, to which, he was devoted, and the country that gave him birth.

The mind of Larned was original as well as great, and his natural disposition open, affectionate, generous and magnanimous. In his modes of thought and action, he was far above affectation or imitation. He had the simplicity, playfulness, tenderness of a child, yet in his loftier traits, like every master-work of nature, he stood, peculiar and alone. Of the fountain of love within him, his letters to his mother, brothers, and sisters, give overflowing evidence. Friends clustered on all sides around him, animated by his presence, coveting his all-trusting and true-hearted confidence, ever joyous in the light of his cheerfulness, the never clouded sunshine of his everliving smiles. If the frankness and vivacity of his temper, occasionally to

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strangers, seemed to border on indiscretion, to those who knew him, his light and trivial fancies were but the scintillations from a guileless spirit, working without remission even in subordinate affairs, for the happiness of others, but finding its rest and home amid serious thoughts and solemn duties. His attachment to relatives and friends, was far above calculations of interest; not only his services, but his purse was theirs.*

To his sister, (whose husband had experienced pecuniary misfortunes,) he suggested the importance of education to her children, remarking, "It is in itself the best fortune in the world, and it has one great advantage of all others, it cannot be taken for *debt*. Let your children, mark my words, have the best education the country can afford. As to H——, she is old enough to begin in good earnest now. I will pay all her school bills, and should she be sent from home (which may be best), I will pay her board and tuition also. As to S——, I claim it as a right to educate him altogether. If I live, he shall have a princely education."

To his widowed mother, six weeks before his death, he wrote to fortify her against undue apprehensions

* Alluding to his departure from home in 1817, while his father was confined by his last illness, the Rev. J. N. Danforth observes:

"I saw the son a few moments after he had taken leave of his father. He did not expect ever to see him again on earth. The next meeting was to be in eternity. It would be vain to attempt a description of the conflicting emotions in his bosom. By a mighty effort, he suppressed these till he reached the street, when suddenly nature found relief in tears. He shook the tears from his brow, compressed his lips, and finally gathered sufficient firmness to bid his other friends farewell. We looked upon him as a living sacrifice."

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for his safety, alleging, that as the yellow fever had never been known to prevail during two successive summers, its ravages would not probably occur that season, and while duty seemed to forbid a visit to the north at that time, he should, if spared, unquestionably, experience the pleasure of an interview the next year. He adds:

"In the mean time, I am constantly anxious for your comfort and happiness. I fear that you do not purchase all the articles that will contribute to your enjoyment. Let me say again, my dearest mother, *spare yourself no expense.* What is it to your children to pay the little pittance for your support? Nothing. Really, I can pay one or two hundred dollars a year without feeling it at all. If you knew how trifling this consideration was to me, you would not hesitate."

To one of his friends, nearly at the same time, he observes:

"As to the fifty dollars you owe me, I should have forgotten it entirely, but for your jogging my memory. You gave me your note in 1818. Long afterwards I found the note in my pocket-book and tore it up. There the matter rested until you resumed it. All I can now say is, pay it when you please. Sometime, when you have the amount and know not what else to do with it, give it to my sister, and tell her I make her a present of it for pin-money. Tell her to write immediately a *suitable* acknowledgment for my *generosity.*"

His religion supplied new and elevating motives to the force and tenderness of his natural affections, and associated therewith, the sentiment of piety towards God, and of a more disinterested and enlarged bene-

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volence towards man.* Devoted to his friends, and incapable of disguise, he was free alike from envy and distrust. It has been suggested, that he was sometimes frank to excess, and that his confidence, easily gained, was sometimes abused.

His benevolence was unbounded, and while obeyed as a principle of duty, it found prompt and never-hesitating allies in the quick sympathies and compassion of his nature. When at Princeton, an unfortunate British sailor, passing through the village, suddenly became deranged, and attempted suicide. He nearly effected his purpose; a crowd gathered around the wounded, and apparently dying man, but without any action for his relief. Mr. Larned appeared, and took the distressed man at once to his lodgings; called a surgeon to bind up his wounds, and, in the spirit of the good Samaritan, supplied all his necessities, watched by him day and night, until reason resumed her sway, and finally supplied him with means of conveyance to New-York, from which port, it was his desire to embark for his native land.

While at New-Orleans, he met on the Levee, a young man from New-York, half naked, and inflamed to madness by intemperance. He immediately employed a person to conduct him to his room, and persuade him to lie down until his return. As the youth became sober, he learned his history, and by a promise of supplying him with clothing, induced him to

* "If he were ardent, it was with discretion; if he had poetic taste and power, they were under the control of his judgment; if he had philanthrophy, it was governed by prudence. His devotion never became superstition, nor his reason skeptical."—*Memoir of Rev. Dr. Greenwood.*

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remain for a day or two at his house. Having purchased for him a suit of clothes, he invited him to continue with him, free of expense, until he could secure for him a passage to New-York, declaring that he would afford him the means of a safe return to his friends. For a time, the invitation was accepted, but the habits of the youth annoyed the whole house, and such was his conduct, on one occasion, as to render it necessary to place him in the hands of the sheriff, and confine him in prison. At length, he left his benefactor, and was soon found reduced to extreme misery. Mr. Larned took him again to his house, gave him an additional supply of clothing, and presented him with a watch, with assurances of his wish, that, should he conduct well, he might return to his family in the character of a gentleman. His kindness had the desired effect, and the young man was restored to his anxious and grateful friends.

Of his deeds of beneficence, we have no record, except in the verbal reports of his people, and occasional references in his correspondence to the miseries he witnessed in the recesses of affliction and guilt, of sickness, pauperism and crime. That he delighted in visits and acts of mercy, we know, and have heard of at least one instance, in which a condemned malefactor caught from his lips, the message of the Gospel; and before his execution, gave evidence of repentance, and expressed the hope of admission to the mansions of just men made perfect.

He was prompt in decision, bold in conduct, and of dauntless and commanding courage. These high qualities were united with an almost instinctive

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knowledge of men, a quick sense of propriety, and perfect grace and courtesy of manners. During one of his tours through the western country, he stopped for the night at a public house, where a crowd of rude men were casting aside restraint, partaking freely of intoxicating liquors, and the boisterous conversation of the bar-room. He entered this room, and politely, but boldly announced, that the Rev. Sylvester Larned would engage in religious worship, in his apartment, at nine o'clock precisely, and that all were cordially invited to attend. The elements of excitement and disorder subsided, many complied with the invitation, and the result is known to Him only, who rules alike in the kingdoms of nature and of grace.

It is related that one of his friends in New-Orleans, of much personal strength, under the influence of insanity, resolved on taking Mr. Larned's life. As is not uncommon in such cases, he kept profoundly secret his purpose, nor was Mr. Larned aware of the disordered state of his mind. His proposal, that they should walk together, was accepted; and having reached a solitary place, the maniac drew a dagger, and furiously commanded his friend to prepare to die. Mr. Larned was not intimidated, but stepping before him, and assuming the boldest and loftiest attitude of courage, exclaimed in a tone of authority, "In the name of the Almighty, I defy you." The dagger fell from the hand of the insane, and he led him, like a child, into the city.

Of his ministerial fidelity, the following anecdote is preserved in the recent valuable work of the Rev. Dr. Baird, on the state of religion in America: "A Spanish

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gentleman once called on him to say, that he wished to join his church and receive the sacrament, for," said he, with an oath, "you are the most eloquent man I have ever heard." Mr. Larned spent an hour in explaining what was required in order to his becoming a member of his church; in other words, what it is to be a true Christian, and the Spaniard went away with a heavy heart to reflect on the subject, which had never been presented to his mind in the same light before."

No man of his age had studied more the genius of Christianity, in its adaptation to the variety of human character, and none more readily entered, sympathetically, into the various habits and peculiarities of different individuals. In connexion with this ready power of ideal communion with the thoughts and feelings of others, his finished character as a gentleman rendered him attractive even to men of the world, and brought him much into general society. But he never forgot his Christian obligations, or to advance, as he might, the cause more dear to him than life.

Ten days before his death, he received a letter from an eminent military officer, whose mind, at past sixty, appeared interested in religious truth, and who had referred with sensibility, but submission, to the decease of a pious brother. In his reply, Mr. Larned says, "Entirely do I appreciate the sentiments you express in relation to this bereavement; they belong, I trust, to a class of feelings suggested by the poet, when he tells us that some feelings are to mortals given, with less of earth and more of heaven; and I devoutly pray that consolation derived from such a source, you may always enjoy. Indeed, if you will pardon the frankness of the

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remark, I look upon the views and exercises which Christianity has inspired in you at so late a period of life, as the mellow and tranquillizing rays of a spring morning just breaking through a bosom over which has hitherto presided the dreary winter of a sixty years' familiarity with the useless applauses and the base persecutions of the world."

Such were the moral endowments constituting an element of his GENIUS; which comprehended also, as we have seen, powers of intellect seldom surpassed, keen and rapid perceptions, a memory retentive and ready, an imagination vivid, lofty and vast, and as the result of all, a judgment quick to discriminate, bold to decide, and seldom either erroneous or obscure. Much that others gained by study, he seemed to know by intuition, and often performed tasks in a few hours, which many might be unable, in days, to accomplish. In college, his lesson was seldom examined until near the hour for recitation, yet he uniformly mastered its difficulties, and acquitted himself well. His skill in the classical languages was evident, and his knowledge of them acquired with rare facility. Somewhat impatient, as is stated, during his education, of severe and protracted investigations, he could, when necessary, concentrate his intellectual forces on any subject with prodigious effect. The evening before the senior vacation at Middlebury, he requested of the President leave of absence, observing that his oration for commencement should be submitted on his return. He was told it must be handed in for examination before his departure. At daylight the next morning it was completed, and in a few hours Larned proceeded with

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a friend to his native town. On one occasion, at Princeton, the professor of theology desired each member of the class to present a written argument on an abstruse metaphysical subject. That of Mr. Larned, produced in a very short time, was deemed without flaw, and pronounced, of all, the best.

In 1821, a venerable professor at Princeton transmitted the following sketch of Mr. Larned to Dr. Cornelius:

"During the former part of his course in this seminary, he was not peculiarly distinguished, except for his eloquence, which was always remarkable; but during the latter part, his mind evidently received a new impulse. His pious feelings became much more predominant, and his progress in theological knowledge much more manifest. His mind did not appear formed for minute and nice disquisitions. I never observed in him any predilection for metaphysical speculations. By strong conceptions to seize the outlines and prominent points of a subject, was his talent. But perhaps he excelled others in nothing more than by the rapidity of his thoughts. He acquired nothing by slow, patient research, but by rapid glances he run over every subject; and when occasion required a sudden exertion, he astonished every one with the extraordinary expansion of his mind.

"His memory was uncommonly quick, and I never knew it fail him in repeating what he had committed to it. His imagination was vivid in a high degree, but more remarkable for strength than delicacy. I mean that he excelled more in the strong coloring of his descriptions, than in those nice touches and almost imperceptible shadings in which the refinement of taste very much consists. But certainly one of the noblest faculties of his mind was that of complete self-command and self-possession. All his resources were at his command. Whatever he knew, he could express

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promptly, and in the best manner. He never hesitated; the march of his mind, when roused, was in a straight-forward course, without halting or deviation.

"Another trait in the character of his mind, which had no small influence in making him an orator of the first order, was a set of feelings at once quick and strong, and yet so much under government, that they never seemed to disturb the clear exercise of his intellect, to degenerate into extravagance, or to affect his countenance and voice in an unpleasant manner. As you have heard him in the pulpit, I need not inform you what power he had of engaging and rivetting the attention of his hearers, and of communicating to them some portion of his own ardor.

"His powers of conversation were, perhaps, equal to his eloquence in the pulpit. His fluency and ease could not be surpassed.

"His soul was formed in every respect for great and difficult enterprises; and when the magnitude of an object filled his mind, he disregarded the difficulties which stood in the way of its accomplishment. I have never seen what is called address more remarkable in any person. The ease with which he overcame the difficulties of erecting a church in New-Orleans, was truly surprising; and that this required unusual address, you know much better than I do.

"I need not inform you, that Mr. Larned possessed a heart distinguished for noble and generous feelings, and susceptible in a high degree of the tender emotions of sincere friendship."

To the charm and power of his eloquence, many who heard him are still living to testify. Of these the discourses in this volume may afford some explanation. But, as is suggested by one of his early and judicious friends, they give but an inadequate idea of their energy

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as they fell from his lips. Wanting is his manly form, his benignant, yet kindling eye, the rich, clear tones of his voice, varying with his sentiments, now stirring, and then, like plaintive music, subduing the spirit, his natural and easy gesture, and more than all, his noble soul poured out in all the treasures of his sympathy and convictions in every word, and look, and action.* When he first appeared as a preacher, he wrote his sermons, but delivered them without reading, and with all the freedom of unwritten discourse. His greatest difficulty, as he remarked, in speaking extemporaneously, was to restrain the emotions and operations of his mind, since the ardor and excitability of his feelings sometimes overcame his physical strength. It is stated, that his habit at New-Orleans was to write one sermon on Saturday, for the Sabbath, and for his second sermon on that day, to rely upon thoughts which might suggest themselves during the hours of worship. It is to be presumed, however, that many subjects upon which he wrote, had shared largely in his previous

* The celebrated John Foster speaks in the following passage of Whitfield; and the same may be applied, we think, with a good degree of truth, to Larned:

"According to the testimony of all his hearers, that have left memorials of him, or that still survive to describe him, he had an energy and happy combination of the passions, so very extraordinary, as to constitute a commanding species of sublimity of character. In their swell, their fluctuations, their very turbulence, these passions so faithfully followed the nature of the subject, and with such irresistible evidence of being utterly clear of all design of oratorical management, that they bore all the dignity of the subject along with them, and never appeared, in their most ungovernable emotions, either extravagant or ludicrous, to any but minds of the coldest or profanest order." Again, Mr. Foster remarks, that, "To ignorant and semi-barbarous men, common truths in Whitfield's preaching, seemed to strike on them in fire and light."

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meditations, and though he composed rapidly, it was with care and effort. Some of his sermons were re-written, and thereby improved. That he was capable, on a sudden, of exhibiting powers of intellect astonishing to his friends, is certain. On several occasions, at Princeton, he spoke extemporaneously, and without special forethought, and with such ability and effect, that it was generally supposed he delivered from memory what had been anxiously prepared. He expressed, while in New-Orleans, late on a Saturday evening, to a venerable friend who had called on him, a wish that he would suggest some text, as he had failed to select one for the next morning. The request was complied with, and at the appointed hour he preached from it, what was regarded, as one of his best sermons.

Mr. Larned is represented by one of his associates, (who drew from his recollections of him a sketch immediately after his death,) "in private conversation to have been rapid, full, overpowering. His voice was generally heard above the rest of the company, and though he talked much, it was always with good sense. "Ideas seemed stirring with so much activity in his mind, and so naturally to seek expression, that it was difficult for him long to be silent. He had great natural intrepidity of soul. This was softened and exalted by religion. His extemporaneous powers were of the first order. I have heard him deliver a discourse in a most rapid and unhesitating style—its periods being complete and harmonious, and have afterwards been informed, that it was altogether extemporary, with the exception of some previous thought. When some fine or great idea flashed upon his mind, his brow would gather, his

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fine blue eye sparkle, as if the very genius of persuasion sat enthroned in its orb, and raising his arm, he would retire a little, and immediately advance, pouring upon his delighted auditors, the full and burning tide of resistless eloquence." Another of his friends, after alluding to the peculiar charm of Mr. Summerfield's preaching, as derived from his gentleness, exquisite tenderness, his simplicity, the truth, grace, and vivacity of his minute touches, the beautiful "interweaving in his discourse, (like golden threads in tapestry,) of the language and illustrations of scripture," and his deep sincerity, remarks: "The oratory of Mr. Larned was more vehement; his thoughts took a wider sweep, his language was rich, his periods harmoniously complete, his sentiments more complex, though not obscured. His sermons being often written, and committed to memory (at two or three readings), had more finish. His extemporaneous powers, however, were unsurpassed.* Short notices for preaching were his delight. To act, and act with the greatest effect, on the impulse of the moment, was one of his distinguishing qualifications." †

* Rev. J. N. Danforth.

† "If I might be permitted to name any man in political life to whom, in constitutional traits, the subject of these remarks bore a remarkable resemblance, that man is Henry Clay. If his name can be mentioned, if his character can be studied, in entire disseverance from politics, with which I have nothing to do, then I think he who knew both, could not fail to note the similarity. Let us compare. They were both remarkable for precocity. They burst upon the eye of the public, like the sun from behind a cloud. Boldness of speech and manner characterised their efforts. Hence, in Kentucky, with its circumjacent region of enterprising spirits, the preaching of Larned was very popular. It met the very tone of their feelings. And if he chanced to tarry a night du-

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When the gloom of the pestilence was gathering over the city, and multitudes retreating, he entered his church one evening, to perform divine service. Few were present, the lamps untrimmed and unlighted, and every thing indicated the presence of sorrow and apprehension. He assisted the sexton in his duties, and finally, in the dim light of the faintly illumined temple, the faces of a few, who had gathered around the altar, were revealed. It was late, and as he stepped within the pulpit, he exclaimed, "*Watchman, what of the night?*" and inspired by the solemn aspect of Providence, and his dread responsibilities in such an hour, spoke as with a commission from Heaven in his hand, to that fixed, silent audience, and so impressed their hearts by truths, which were the treasure and life of his own, as amid all changes of time and place on earth, could never be forgotten.*

ring his travels at a noisy tavern in this region, he would not have it suspected that he was ashamed of his Master; and so the revellers, like sons of Belial, under the rebuke of God's ancient prophet, must either disperse or be still, or come to the preacher's room, and hear him offer one of his fervent prayers to God. There is a moral intrepidity, a prevailing dignity, about some men, which subdues inferior spirits, and exacts from them that homage which would never be paid by compulsion. Who knows not that the western orator combines grace with energy, imagination, aye, passion, in its best sense, with reasoning; that his voice has a depth, a tone, a compass, a flexibility, which are given to few; that his power over the affections of the human soul, his skill with the mysterious chords of feeling, is wonderful; that it is better for him to write what he has spoken, than to speak what he has written,—and that even then, in the process of the press, the living principle loses somewhat of its power; that, in a word, large and comprehensive views are as much the natural result of the structure of his mind, as the all-pervading light is of the sun in the firmament."—*Rev. J. N. Danforth.*

* This incident has called forth the following beautiful lines from the

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A gentleman, on terms of intimacy with him, had the curiosity, on one Saturday afternoon, to look over the fragments of a discourse, which Mr. Larned had just prepared, in expectation of preaching the next day, among strangers. He remarked, "Surely, you do not intend to give us this unfinished composition to-morrow?" "Certainly," said Mr. L. "and I hope you may be one of my audience." He was so, and scarcely had the preacher risen, before every sentiment of distrust vanished, he thought no more of the speak-

pen of Mrs. M. S. B. Dana, whose various well known productions breathe alike the true spirit of poetry and devotion:

'Tis evening in the city, for the sun
  Has reached his royal chamber in the west;
And now, his long midsummer journey done,
  Like a tired traveller, lays him down to rest:
Now lie the verdant hill and peaceful glade
Enwrapt in night's impenetrable shade.

The god of day, rejoicing in his prime,
  Had been more prodigal of light and heat
Than was his wont, even in that sultry clime.
  His penetrating rays on every street
Pour'd burning fury down; and wo to him
Who lingered for a moment in his beam!

Men prayed that he would hide his glowing face,
  Or turn away his eyes of scorching fire;
That clouds would hold him in their dark embrace,
  And stifle thus his burning, blasting ire;
God's glorious gift to man, the blessed sun,
Seemed turned into a curse—a fiery one!

In every habitation they were fain
  To draw the curtains every window o'er;
All sought alike some cool retreat to gain,
  And wooed the zephyr near the shaded door,
But wooed in vain; no zephyr's gentle play
Refreshed the aching brow that dreadful day.

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er's reputation, or manner, but found himself borne along with the whole audience, absorbed and overpowered by the majestic force and tenderness of his eloquence.

Of the influence of his conversation, a little anecdote is preserved. While travelling from his native town to Albany, he talked freely with his fellow-pas-

The dozing house-dog, stretched upon the floor,
  Hung out his parched tongue dejectedly;
Or, restless, changed his posture o'er and o'er,
  And on his master fixed his languid eye
With meek beseeching gaze, which seemed to say,
"O, will it never end—this tedious day?"

The ruminating kine had even left
  Their resting-places on the shaded green,
And, deeply wading in the stream, bereft
  Almost of life, they stood, with downcast mien:
How grateful from the cooling stream to drink,
Screened by the moss-grown trees upon its brink!

But now the evening threw her shadowy veil
  Over the face of Nature, and the moon
Far in the distance raised her visage pale,
  And peered upon the landscape. But she shone
Upon the earth with sad and sickly ray,
As through the arch of heaven she took her way.

And where are now the cheerful voices, heard
  Ever at sunset hour—tones wont to ring
Like merry music from the uncaged bird,
  Warbling his welcome to the early spring?
Where are the tones that used to fill the air
From stately hall and lowly cottage,—where?

Hushed is the music of light-hearted mirth,
  Hushed is the tinkling of the gay guitar;
A painful silence settles on the earth;
  No welcome sound falls on the listening ear,
Not e'en the footfall of the passer by;
No—nought is heard save your own echoed sigh.

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sengers, and the time most agreeably passed away in the mutual exchange, on a variety of topics, of their thoughts and opinions. In this company, was an English gentleman of education, a traveller in many parts of the world. On arriving at Albany, this individual inquired the name and profession of Mr. Larned, observing, "among the men of all countries which

And why? Alas! Death's angel is abroad,
  And Pestilence stalks before him. Through the door
Alike of hall and cottage have they trod,
  And seized alike the wealthy and the poor;
Th' unwelcome guests small ceremony show,
Nor till their work is finished, will they go.

Their work of doom and death. Man's mortal foe
  But points his skeleton finger, and behold!
Pale Pestilence has struck the fatal blow!
  The lovely and unlovely, young and old,
The gay, the grave, the prince, the peasant, all
Alike, before his poisoned arrows fall.

And many a noble form must soon be laid,
  Unknown, unwept, within a stranger's grave;
And many a doting wife, and loving maid,
  Dwelling beyond the intervening wave,
Must, broken-hearted, weep through day and night,
Till re-united in the realms of light.

But who are these—a small and silent band—
  Now slowly gath'ring in the house of prayer?
And who is he who holds in either hand,
  A torch to dissipate the darkness there?
'Tis LARNED—he whose lamp was ever bright,
Amid the moral darkness, pouring light.

And they who silent sit amid the gloom,
  Have come to worship God:—a chosen few,
Undaunted by the terrors of the tomb,
  Whose vaulted chambers yawn before their view.
So, in the stormy day, may we be found,
Unmoved, while angry horrors rage around!

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I have visited, that young man shines most in conversation, and possesses the greatest powers of eloquence."

It was in the study of the late Dr. Nevins, of Baltimore, soon after the brilliant star of Mr. Larned had passed away from the public sight, that the writer en-

Behold the youthful minister of God!
With noiseless step from lamp to lamp he goes,—
Feeds them with oil; and soon their rays abroad
Through the dim aisles are shining, to disclose
Nought but the empty cushion's faded green,
Save where those few pale-featured ones are seen.

But paler far than all is he, who now,
With languid step, ascends the pulpit stair;
Yet there's a holy calmness on his brow,
As round he gazes with majestic air;
In solemn tones, while grows his eye more bright,
Repeating, "What, O watchman, of the night?"

"What of the night?" Young watchman, dost thou know
That question full of meaning is *to thee?*
Thy night is nearly past. The first faint glow
Of thy celestial morning dawns. O, see!
Look to the east, where yon ascending ray
The herald is of thine eternal day?

'Twas even so. Ere long, that youthful head,
On its cold pillow, earth, was lying low;
But, glory be to God! the blessed dead
Die not to us, though from this world they go.
Their works do follow them. His setting sun
Left floods of light. Servant of God, well done!

The following stanzas in allusion to the scenes of that evening, have recently appeared in the Commercial Advertiser of this city:

The city's pride, and halls, and bowers,
In night and terror shrouded lie;
The Church her lone and silent towers
Lifts 'mid the still and sultry sky.

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joyed the happiness of perusing in manuscript, a single sermon, which that lamented man had presented as a slight memorial of affection to his friend. I was permitted to copy it. It met my idea of his genius,

Dim burn the flickering lamps below—
  Pale trembling shadows lend their power,
Casting the drapery of woe
  O'er the deep worship of the hour.

"What of the night?"—O watchman, say.
  Present to bless, thy prayers I hear;
Wait, watch, till breaking, bright'ning day
  Smile on thy grief and calm thy fear.

Great crowned King on Zion's height,
  We lowly bow before thy face;
With suppliant hands implore the light,—
  With bleeding hearts thy healing grace.

Thinned by disease, a broken band
  Seek, sorrowing, fainting, shelter here;
Submissive eye thy chastening hand,
  Till the sweet star of dawn appear.

As at the eve of burning day
  Lone weary pilgrims seek for rest,
If shrub or flower its bloom display,
  Near moss-grown fountain cold and blest,

We from the hot and parching breath
  Of wasting fever seek thy shrine;
Abide thy word for life or death—
  The same to us, so we are Thine.

Sin cannot look upon Thy throne—
  Darkness expires before Thine eye—
Eternity is all Thine own
  When Time and Nature fade and die.

Amid Thy light, Immortal King,
  Our home by faith we darkly see—
Hail, coming Lord! in triumph bring
  Our souls to life, to Heaven, to Thee.

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and was preserved as a precious specimen of his eloquence. Subsequently, his other manuscripts were placed in my hands, and, on examination, confirmed the opinion of his merits, derived from general testimony, and that solitary composition. Time, and reflection, and further attention to the discourses herewith submitted to the public, convinced me, that the future would increase his reputation, that his powers could hardly at first have been duly appreciated, or their nature fully understood.

A combination of great and original endowments disposed and enabled him to open, comparatively, a new path in his profession, and with an independence, moral and intellectual, pecuilarly his own, to cast aside some of its traditional formalities and restraints, to dispense with useless technicalities, and to carry home his doctrines and appeals, in expressions, natural, yet select, in a style at once simple, compact, elevated, and energetic, to the business and bosoms of men. This was high merit. But it was not all. He possessed in an eminent degree, the quality of good sense, which enabled him to understand the thoughts and workings of other minds, so as to meet them effectually, on their own principles, and penetrate and move the inmost depths of their own feelings. His language was ever subordinate to thought—his imagination to reason. He sought successfully to give unity to his subject, so that its parts and divisions, like the bones and sinews of the human body, should be invisible in their strength, and while clothed in beauty, the whole should be animated by one spirit, and bear on one end. Nothing irrelevant, nothing superfluous, was admitted. He enters at once, and proceeds steadily onward in his argument, never pausing,

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and never deviating from his main design. His words are things, his illustrations arguments, and even his ornaments seem to but clasp, or perhaps, occasionally, stud the simple drapery of his great and majestic thoughts.

In some of these sermons, will be found, I imagine, a combination of unity and simplicity, of beauty and force, of imagination and passion, of harmony and just proportion, of fulness and completeness, extremely rare in our own or any other language. Closely and compactly wrought, the purpose of the whole seems pervading every part, while each part contributes essentially to the one object of the whole.

He had the rare talent of being eloquent, without seeming sensible of it, of hiding from himself and others, the power by which he moved them. As by an invisible wand, a look, or a word, so simple at the time as to escape observation, he opened the fountains of sensibility, and the streams gushed forth. The more unexpected the effect, the more certain, and the greater, the less apparent the cause. In the various qualities of his mind, and his personal endowments, he approached as near as any man whom we have known, or of whom we have read, to our idea of a perfect orator.

Though no man expressed his own views on religious subjects, with more candor and decision, he possessed a catholic spirit, and was ready to welcome to his communion, regardless of the peculiarities of their creeds, all true Christian disciples. Well armed for controversy, he appears to have been averse to it, preferring, rather to win the affections, than confound the reason, to exhibit Truth with her attractions, rather than in the attitude, and brandishing the weapons, of war.*

* "Astronomers tell us that we are nearer to the sun in December

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The body of Mr. Larned was the appropriate habitation for his mind, combining in just proportions, dignity, grace, and strength. Art could have desired no finer model, and seldom, in her noblest statues, has she embodied the idea of a more perfect form. His countenance well expressed his soul—his voice was persuasion, and, as he spoke, his eye threw a fascinating brilliancy upon the rich treasures of thought and sentiment, flung out from the depths and stores of his nature, so lavishly, around him.

Finally, upon his writings (alas, that they are so few!) will be found the glow of a pure devotion;—they both enlighten the understanding and warm the heart.

Alas! what now to their beloved and admired author is human censure, or human applause? What will they soon be to us? In a great enterprise, he nobly fell, in the dawn of his manhood and his fame. Anxious to introduce into the chief city of the south and west, so soon to embrace a mighty population, from various quarters of the world, a pure Protestant Christianity, by courage and address, by disinterestedness, zeal, and perseverance, those qualities which command the will and affections of man, he subdued every difficulty, and founded a church, to the praise of the Living God. May it stand for ever, the refuge and sanctuary for thousands, who shall aspire within its gates, to a pure worship in the Temple of Eternity!

than in June; so that there is a sort of dog-day fervor in controversial piety, in which the Church may be really further from God than in the dead of winter."—*Discourse of Mr. Cheever on the character of Dr. Marsh.*

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SERMONS.

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PRAYER.

[In the hand-writing of Mr. Larned.]

ALMIGHTY AND EVERLASTING GOD:

The heavens declare Thy praise, and the earth is filled and animated with Thy glory. All the works of creation, all the events of Providence, all the exhibitions of grace, conspire to exalt our conceptions of Thy character and to exact our acknowledgments of Thy beneficence and love. But on such a day as this, commemorating the amazing mysteries of redemption, we desire especially to approach and adore Thee as the Saviour of sinners—the Justifier of him that believeth—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We bless Thy name, that when the apostacy had blasted all our hopes—when sin had defaced the Divine image in our hearts—even then it was a time of compassion in Heaven. We thank Thee that a plan of mercy has been devised which preserves the majesty of Thy perfections, while it proffers pardon to the guilty, consolation to the desponding, and salvation to a perishing world. We bring to Thee the tribute of our united thanksgivings, that the Son of Thy bosom is one day to see of the travail of His soul and to be satisfied—that the period is to arrive when the Heathen shall be given Him for an inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. And while we confess with gratitude that every age of the Church has testified to the faithfulness of Thy promise, we implore Thee to hasten the time for its complete and *universal* fulfilment. May the intelligence of life and immortality brought to light in the Gospel be conveyed to the most distant and destitute parts of the world. May the poor, the ignorant, the de-

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graded, be taught the precious news of redeeming love and trained for the glories and triumphs of immortality. Adjust, we pray Thee, the dispensations of Thy Providence in such a manner, that the day of prophecy and prayer may speedily come—that the supplications of Thy people may be heard and their exertions rewarded—that soon Thy word may be read in every language and Thy love felt in every heart—that the knowledge of the Lord may rapidly be diffused so as to fill the earth as the waters cover the seas. Look down in mercy on this favored land, to which Thou hast already extended so much kindness and care. Dwell in our public councils. May the Congress of these United States, now assembled, be directed to such measures as Thou shalt own and bless. May all our civil and religious privileges be secured. May every form of infidelity, vice, and error be done away. May we cherish a lively sense of Thy rich and bountiful blessings which we enjoy, while so many other countries are consigned to ignorance, to oppression, or to captivity. May we witness the universal effusion of Thy Spirit, and the multiplied trophies of Thy grace and mercy, till we can confidently appropriate the benediction of that happy people whose God is the Lord. Especially, O our heavenly Father, do we implore Thy smiles on this city. Here, may the Redeemer appear in the greatness of his power, and gather many sons and daughters unto glory. Here, may the Holy One of Israel be seen repairing the desolations of Zion, and visiting Jerusalem with peace. Here, may that religion be revived which Jesus Christ has given to men as the medium of forgiveness and joy to all who are governed by its principles. Pour out Thy Spirit, we beseech Thee, on Thy servants in this place, who are appointed to proclaim the truth and dispense the consolations of the Gospel. May their responsibility be faithfully discharged. May their labors be rewarded in the efficacy and success in which Thou art able, amidst all their trials, to make them rejoice. Smile, we pray Thee, on the children of Thy grace, and strengthen them to perform the duties of their profession. O may they feel, in all its emphasis, the impressive declaration of Thy word, that they are as a city set on an hill,—that by their fidelity and exertions, and prayers, the visitations of mercy in this place may be

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instrumentally accelerated—that by their lukewarmness and apathy, hundreds may be retained in their bondage to sin—hundreds may sleep on in their lethargy, and the Church may long continue to mourn that so few come to her solemn feasts. Great God, awaken among us all a spirit of supplication.—Help us to be more earnest and fervent in presenting at Thy throne the case of our own souls, and of the souls of those who have never tasted the blessed consolation of a hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. O our Saviour, remember the impenitent and unconcerned, the misguided prodigals who have wandered from their Father's house; leave them not to themselves; follow them in their infatuation and guilt, and teach them to return; alarm their security, and lead them to the fountain of Thy blood. How long shall the children of this world remain aliens from the commonwealth of Israel? How long shall they continue in their way to perdition, when there is room enough and to spare, in a Redeemer's heart; when they are invited to come to Thee, without money, and without price; when every thing around them in this life admonishes them to make their peace with God, and every thing awaiting them hereafter, urges upon them, while it is called to-day, to secure the happiness of an endless and unalterable eternity?

Wilt Thou adapt Thy kindness to the characters and necessities of all classes of men? Support the sick, the disconsolate, and the dying, with that everlasting hope which enters within the vale—which sustains the afflictions and despondencies connected with the present state of being, and opens beyond the grave those peaceful mansions which Christ has prepared for all that love him. Be with us during the exercises before us. Solemnize our minds, exalt and spiritualize our affections, and send us a refreshing from Thy presence. May it be good for us that we were here. May we find our Christian graces invigorated, our hopes strengthened, and the life of God in our souls promoted!

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SERMONS.

SERMON I.

"What think ye of Christ?"
Matt. xxii. 42.

In the history to which this passage is annexed, we learn that our Saviour had been preaching in the Jewish capital. After concluding his discourse, the Pharisees crowded around him, libelling, as usual, the purity of his motives, and arraigning his claims to the Messiahship. To all this, our Lord replied, without the least asperity or irritation, by retorting the simple question of the text—"What think *ye* of Christ?" In other words, if you impeach my pretensions to the Messiahship, let me ask, what do you expect of a Messiah? What must he do more than I have done, to attest the divinity of his mission? What character must he sustain different from my own, to suit the predictions of the Word of God?

This was a kind of attack which the Pharisees seem not to have expected. Had our Saviour begun to reason with them, they would have held their ground; for what chance is there of convincing those who are resolved never to be convinced? But when, instead of marshalling the field of argument, he merely calls on them to maintain their own position, they are at once thrown into consternation. Tell

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me, says he, your own views of the Christ; if I have said or done anything which your Bible does not teach you to expect from him, I am willing to plead guilty; only come forward and show that the charge is just. It is not at all strange, that after stumbling and stammering through a sort of answer, the Pharisees were finally silenced, and from that day forth durst not ask him any more questions.

Now, my hearers, we have our subject before us: — The character of Jesus Christ, regarded as an evidence of his religion. Before we proceed, there is one reflection which ought to be candidly weighed. Biography, no matter of what kind, should never be read without knowing the spirit of the times to which it refers. The standard by which actions are usually measured, is public sentiment; and this, we all know, is constantly changing. Hence it happens, that by the lapse of years and the progress of refinement, what appears superlatively great at one period is received with very different feelings at another. For example: suppose Bacon, or Newton, or Boyle, or Franklin, had lived in the Court of Augustus Cæsar; had they given the world *then* what they gave it afterwards, they would have been, I know not, but consecrated. No applause too loud—no laurels too costly or lavish, could have been heaped upon them. Two thousand years ago, some of our modern discoveries and inventions would have been looked upon as almost miraculous; and individuals now, who fill but a moderate space on the pages of Eulogy, old Rome would have enshrined and immortalized in columns of marble. Now, let us apply this principle to the subject under discussion. The moral world *now*, and the moral world when our Saviour appeared, are very different things. It has undergone a vast change. Eighteen centuries have altered some of its most important features—have matured and mellowed them, a Christian would say—have wrinkled them, a sceptic

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would say, into the appearance of dotage. Be this as it may, in order to judge fairly of Christianity, we ought to go back to the time when it first arose. We, who have been taught it from the cradle, may see in it nothing remarkable—nothing original in its principles—nothing striking in the lineaments of the system. But the question is, what should we have thought, had we lived 1800 years ago? We must ascertain the spirit of those times. We must represent an obscure young man—single-handed, and without education, establishing a new religion. We must remember, that he opposed idolatry when the most refined nations practised it; that he inculcated the forgiveness of injuries when they ridiculed the idea; that he taught some of the greatest moral and religious truths which the world had never heard before. We must reflect, that he disclosed his views on every subject that occurred; that he was called on frequently for opinions which most men would have wanted time to make up; that what he said was not only never retracted, but was said at the time in the most prompt and positive manner; and that the whole body of his moral doctrines, new, original, and surprising as they were, have been approved, without exception, by the united wisdom and experience of every subsequent age; and this, too, when not another individual can be found in all antiquity, but his sentiments are now seen to have been more or less exceptionable—not another, but on some points is now proved to have been defective, on some to have been erroneous, and on all to have been materially bettered by those who have lived since. It is with these reflections, that we ought to examine the character of Jesus Christ. *His* principles alone have stood the test of time. They have never been mended. Every body, good and bad, agrees that his system of morals is unrivalled. It has been charged with no fault and no defect. Statesmen, jurists, and governments have taken advantage

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of its excellence; and yet that Jesus Christ had no opportunities. During his life, not a single man of learning took his side. He lived without books and without instruction; poor, unpopular, persecuted, and finally submitted to martyrdom, rather than disclaim the least of his sentiments; and when he died, there was hardly a man of sense in the world but thought his religion had inevitably gone with him to the grave.

Permit me, my hearers, to call your attention to this wonderful personage, viewed merely as a man, as the founder of the Christian religion. In the first place, let me mention his exemption from every thing like ambitious or aspiring views. Look at him where we will, he evinces the most consistent humility which no applause could inflate, and no trials dissatisfy. He was emphatically meek and lowly in heart; and there is something in the whole history which shows that this disposition was not affected. No attempt is seen to display it through the whole New Testament; not a word is said to bring it before us as a mark of his piety. We are left to draw the conclusion from his life, and not from his lips, nor the lips of his followers. In his meekness, too, we find nothing unnatural or constrained. He exposes the faults of his friends; He reproves the malice of his enemies; He speaks under all circumstances like a man of authority, and yet he is humble; He retires from public admiration; He works his miracles before the world, but never remains to listen to his own praise. He appears in the whole course of his ministry to have had no motive of personal aggrandizement. So far from this, he frequently told his disciples that he expected nothing from the world but a cruel death, and that if they followed him at all, it must be on these conditions: Whosoever, says he, is not willing to abandon houses and lands, and parents, yea, and his own life also, cannot be my disciple. And as if this was

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not enough, he is particular to enumerate the trials, hardships, and sufferings which they must endure. He tells them fairly to count the cost before submitting to the perils of Christianity. In a word, every thing which could mortify or afflict, he first encountered himself without a murmur, and then informed them, that through just the same process they must pass in entering the kingdom of Heaven. Another characteristic of Jesus Christ was that quality which is commonly called good sense. His conduct throughout was what we might expect from a great man embarked in a great undertaking. Firm without obstinacy, strict without superstition, and cautious without concealment or disguise, he adapted himself to every class of men, not by the accommodation of his principles, but by his amiable manners. In private life, he appears the mild and endearing friend; in his public labors, the firm and undaunted advocate of Truth, without softening its pungency, without diverting its application. He did not covet opposition on the one hand, nor did he fear to inflame it on the other. He moved steadily forward in the unwavering light of his own mind; and, whether in the debates of the Sanhedrim, or at the table of an acquaintance, he conveyed an irresistible impression of his greatness and glory. Every word is so full of meaning, and every action so full of example, and each one is so exactly in character with all the rest, that even if we could question his heart, we are compelled to admit the strength and comprehensiveness of his mind. There is a little incident recorded of him, which illustrates the soundness of his judgment very forcibly. His enemies once took occasion, when he was surrounded by a great crowd, to ask him if it were proper to pay tribute to Cæsar. Had he said Yes, the mob would have torn him in pieces, for they hated Cæsar and all his measures. Had he said No, the Government would have arrested him

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for exciting rebellion against the king. What, my hearers, should you and I have answered? Feeling that it was a question which it belonged not to him to settle, he merely replied, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's." The same prudent, discreet, and judicious behaviour, we discern through his whole life; and I wish particularly to remark, that he is the only individual on the pages of history who has never been charged with a single criminal or censurable action. Socrates deified a dumb animal; Plato justified drunkenness; Cicero allowed idolatry; Aristotle enjoined the stifling of weakly children; Diogenes inculcated and practised licentiousness; and Zeno and Cato committed suicide. But our Saviour has never been reproached for a single immoral precept, or a single improper example. Even his enemies—the most violent opposers of his religion, from Pilate down to Paine—have admitted unanimously that they can find no fault in the man.

A third constituent in the character of Christ, was the *practicalness*, if I may call it so, of his life and doctrines. Why is it, my hearers, that such names as Howard, McIntosh, Reynolds, and Granville Sharpe, hold so high a place in public affection? Because, you will say, the public have value received for it. Those men *earned* their laurels. They consecrated themselves to the cause of philanthropy. They explored the dungeons, the hospitals, and almost the tombs of their fellow-beings, and made them ring with the news of mercy. True. And must that Saviour, who has not only spent, but sacrificed his life in the same work—must he remain forgotten, while those are embalmed who have neither surpassed nor equalled, but only imitated, Him? What is the misery which he did not relieve? or the ignorance which he did not enlighten? or the wretchedness which he did not console and sanctify? Rather, let me ask,

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where were the Howards or Sharpes of Greece and Rome? Who ever heard of such men till after Christianity appeared to impel and encourage them on their errands of mercy? Name a single *one* who lived before the Star of Bethlehem broke through the heavens, to show us not merely the hopes of a better world, but the relations and duties of this.

But not in benevolence alone was our Saviour practical. It was seen in his whole deportment. Wherever we look at him, there is nothing which wears the aspect of enthusiasm. His devotions are most strikingly appropriate. Solemn and impressive they may be, but they are never heated. In the inimitable prayer prescribed for his followers, and in the discourses which he delivered, there is a majesty of thought, an elevation of piety, and a tenderness of heart, which no man ever did or ever will attentively examine without admiration. In his conduct, too, we find no affected singularity; he dressed, he ate, he conversed, like other people; he accepted their invitations; he was a guest at their entertainments; he was a partaker of their joys and their sorrows; he was engaging in his manners, and affectionate in his attachments; and unpopular only because he spoke the truth. And so of his precepts. They were all suited to the condition of human life. He did not require mankind, like Rousseau, to return to a state of nature; nor did he, like the disciples of Monkery, invite them to caves and cloisters; nor did he, like Zeno, instruct them to throw their wealth into the sea; nor like the Eastern Faquirs, did he enjoin them to scourge their bodies for the purification of their souls. He taught a plain and sober religion, which thousands and tens of thousands have found to comfort them here, to sustain them in death, and to save them forever.

There is only one more consideration in regard to our Saviour, to which I shall now advert, and that is, the man-

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ner of his death. You will recollect, my hearers, that he might have been pardoned had he renounced his opinions, but he uniformly rejected the offer. Now, if you or I were condemned to the scaffold for our religion, it would not be so strange that we should persist in it to the last extremity. For in such a case we should be convinced of its truth: we should believe, whether correctly or not, that our future happiness depended upon our perseverance. Hence it is that martyrdoms have occurred in every religion: for to every religion there have been men so sincerely attached, that they would rather lay down life than disclaim it. But with Jesus Christ it was not so: if he had been an impostor, he knew, of course, that his future happiness could not depend upon dying with a lie on his lips. So far from this, every conceivable motive—his duty—his interest—his welfare, called upon him to abandon his errors before he went into the presence of the Eternal God. If he had been an enthusiast, I admit he might have held out to the last, and been a martyr without regret. But I ask you, my hearers, is there any thing that looks like enthusiasm in his history? Does it appear in the profound and well-adjusted system of Ethics, for which the wisest men in the world acknowledge themselves indebted to him? Can any one in his senses suppose that the gigantic intellect, which must have devised the religion of the New Testament, was so strangely excited as to imagine itself inspired in the very project which it had so much coolness and prudence to plan? And if he died as an impostor, he is the only man that ever was, or ever will be, who, without any earthly motive, submits to a voluntary death, for opinions which he knows at the time to be false. But look, my hearers, at the manner in which our Saviour behaved in his last moments. He had no legal trial at all; but at such as he had, the officers of Government were convinced of his innocence, and accordingly acquitted him.

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This, however, did not appease the mob. They were determined on taking his life, and frightened the Court into submission. Had he not a right to complain? Where is the man who would not have complained? He did not. His friends appeared in arms to rescue him, but instead of permitting it, he went forward in person and dissuaded them from the attempt. In the face of all the laws of the Roman empire, he was led out to execution the very day he had been publicly acquitted. His deportment on the occasion was entirely tranquil. Had he been an impostor, he would at least have remonstrated against the cruelty of his sentence; or had he been an enthusiast, he would have betrayed that high-wrought excitement which sets danger and death at defiance. But he did neither. I know not that in his whole life he evinced more composure, than during the hour which finally closed it. After arriving on the ground, he seems to have been extremely exhausted, and to have said but little. That little, however, was not in his own defence. It was chiefly in bidding farewell to his family and friends, and in pardoning one of the criminals who was nailed by his side. Just before he expired, he cast a look of tenderness on the crowd, and instead of reproving them for their cruelty, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." O, my hearers, what a sentiment on the quivering lips of an innocent and murdered man! How do the fashionable ideas of honor, and the popular tribunal of pistols and balls, and the bleeding and frenzied bosom of premature widowhood and orphanage, how do they appear at the foot of Mount Calvary! What must we think of him, so cool in enthusiasm, or so godlike in imposture, as to be the first to inculcate the forgiveness of injuries, and the first to exemplify his own lesson while bathed in the blood of the Cross! With such a scene before me, I can no longer wonder that infidelity it-

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self, in one of its lucid intervals, should have burst into that impressive exclamation, "If Socrates died like a philosopher, Jesus Christ died like a God!"

And now, my hearers, let me repeat the inquiry, "What think ye of Christ?" Was he what he claimed to be? or was he a victim to the rottenness and corruption of his own heart? There is no middle ground. To use his own words in another case, "Those who are not for him must be against him." Either Jesus Christ must be the King of Heaven, or he must be, I tremble to say what.———Look at his life—his character—his death; and if your minds can be goaded up to pronounce him the abominable panderer of imposture and falsehood,—if they can, I have one favor to ask, which those surely who are too wise to believe the New Testament, can have no apology for refusing: I wish to be informed who wrote the biography of our Saviour. We have often wondered that the authors of the Letters of Junius, and of the Poems of Ossian, could have resisted the temptation of declaring their names. But to have composed out of raw materials such a production as the Life of Christ; to have combined so faultless and original a system of morals; to have delineated a perfect character so completely that enmity itself can discover no defect; and all this 1800 years ago, when the greatest philosophers of the age had been unsuccessful in similar attempts; that any mere man should have done this, and especially that he should have concealed his name, and not only so, but should have palmed the whole upon another, is one of those logical probabilities that I confess myself unable to comprehend. But, my hearers, I will not insult your understandings by pushing the argument further. Let me rather ask another question, conveyed by the text, What do we think of Christ, as our Saviour and Judge? How far are we conformed to the holy example which he has bequeathed for our imitation? Take, for in-

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stance, his humility: Have we lived like him, above the world, unmoved by its praise, and unambitious of its splendor? Have we resisted the approach of pride, and filled our proper place in the dust, and sought in our closets, and on our kness, that spirit of meekness which our great Exemplar evinced? Look, also, at the judicious and sober consistency of his life. Have we any corresponding indications in our own? Is our piety, like his, the pure and steady flame which enlightens, and animates, and warms our hearts; or is it the tremulous blaze of feeling kindled by sympathy, and kept alive by enthusiasm and animal excitement? Inquire once more, and see what *practical* effects our religion produces. Do we imitate our Saviour in his unwearied solicitude to instruct the ignorance, relieve the necessities, and console the trials of our fellow-men? Do our purses confirm what our profession supposes? Will the records of poverty find our names, in the day of judgment, enrolled as the trustees of its wants? Ah, my hearers, that hollow-hearted Christianity which makes long prayers, and wears long faces, but puts off practical things with a convenient "Be ye warmed, be ye clothed," is literally less than nothing, and vanity. Never, till hypocrisy is numbered among the cardinal virtues, will such a wretched pretext pass for the genuine currency of the Bible. In the disclosure of the final day, the inquiry of our text will be put to us again; and if we should then be found to have contradicted in our lives what we professed with our lips, the effrontery of our pretensions will only aggravate our guilt, and lend a fresh sting to the despair of Eternity.

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SERMON II.

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled."

Acts xxiv., 25.

There is something in truth, my hearers, which renders it awfully commanding and impressive. Such are the relations which the Eternal God has made it to sustain towards the moral sense, that no scepticism, however daring, and no hostility, however malignant, are proof against the Herculean power of its grasp. Were it not for this, on what principle are we to account for the prodigious success which attended the preaching of the Apostle Paul? It is true, he had the advantage of talents, and of a liberal and accomplished education. But we should suppose his public performances were by no means extraordinary. He is said to have been a man of inferior personal appearance, of infirm health, and of a very unpleasant hesitancy of enunciation. Yet, we find him, in spite of the unpopular enterprise in which he was embarked, commanding respect from every audience, and in every circle. Infidelity withered under his eye; wit shrunk from the dignity of his frown; the decorated insolence of office trembled before him even while he stood a criminal at its bar; and if the relations of history may be credited, the charge which finally brought him to the stake, was no other than the uneasiness he had awakened in the mind of Nero, and the restraints which his preaching was likely to impose upon that debauched and abandoned emperor.

The attitude in which we are called to contemplate this wonderful apostle to-day, is not at all judicial, although he

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is standing before the chief magistrate of the country. Several weeks previous to this period, he had been put on trial, but owing to a pretended absence of testimony, on the part of the Government, it was adjourned. During the interval, while he was awaiting the result in prison, Felix came into town, with his wife Drusilla, and actuated by a curiosity more natural than it was delicate, they sent for St. Paul, to hear him explain and defend his principles. Now, my hearers, remark two or three historical facts connected with these transactions. When the Jewish nation became tributary to the Roman Empire, the government was entrusted to procurators, appointed by the crown. One of these officers you behold in the person of Claudius Felix, who, by taking advantage of imperial imbecility, contrived to insinuate himself into public life. He is depicted by his biographers as exceedingly avaricious, trampling alike upon every dictate of justice, and every suggestion of humanity, when his own interest was at stake; and it appears, from the account, that he retained the apostle in confinement merely in the expectation that his friends would purchase his release. In regard to Drusilla, his conduct had been stamped with indelible infamy. When the procurator first saw this woman, she was the wife of a neighboring prince, and the solemn obligations of marriage were resting on her soul. But he persuaded her to violate her fidelity,—to abandon her engagements,—and to sacrifice to an illegitimate union with himself, all the claims of her former husband, all the responsibility of her own vows, and all the chastity and sacredness of conjugal love; and this, too, when he was Governor of Judea—when the people were looking to him for an example—and when he knew, as every body knows, that practises which receive the impress of fashion and of rank, are seized and circulated with redoubled eagerness through all the subordinate classes of society.

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My hearers, mark the apostle. He reasoned of righteousness—for he spoke to a man, who, in addition to his general avidity for wealth, was at that very moment keeping him confined, in hope of a reward for his liberation. He reasoned of temperance—for he spoke to a man who had there by his side a living witness that no ties were too sacred for him to burst, and no passion too debased for him to cherish. He reasoned of a judgment to come—for he spoke to a man, who, however his official standing might shield him from human punishment, would one day appear at the tribunal of Christ, to answer for the influence of his example, and the aggravation of his guilt. Such are the outlines of the apostle's address. The sacred volume has not furnished us with the *details*. For these we must resort to the few hints disclosed by the text, applied to the characters and circumstances of those for whom they were intended. He reasoned of righteousness,—a term sometimes, perhaps, commonly regulated in its meaning by the exigency of the passage in which it stands. It seems here to be contrasted more immediately with that sordid and mercenary spirit which had prompted Felix unjustly to protract the imprisonment of his captive. Now, my hearers, although this specific act can never again be performed, the temper by which it was dictated, may still be found. It is found in every improper method for becoming rich. To neglect the duties of religion for the speculations of trade—to devote the Sabbath to the counting-room, instead of the sanctuary—to take advantage of the misfortunes and necessities of others, and then, with a disposition which always accompanies this, to cling, with the grasp of death, to a property that ought ever to be laid at the foot of the Cross. What is this but the very same spirit which St. Paul reprobated in Felix? I do not mean that the Gospel of Christ imposes restraints upon the acquisition of wealth; so far from that,

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we are encouraged, we are instructed, to adopt every expedient, which the Bible will warrant, for extending our usefulness, and increasing our enjoyments. But when the love of money absorbs those affections which are due to God alone—when it leads us to conduct over which a death-bed will extort the anguish of remorse—when it deafens the ear to the cry of the widow and the orphan—when it erects an intrenchment around the heart which frowns back the approach of indigence, and the plea of suffering and distress,—then it is that we ought to exchange places with the Roman deputy, and tremble under the lesson which St. Paul thundered to his conscience. For, after all, my hearers, what is wealth when acquired or retained with feelings such as these? Literally a curse instead of a blessing, enhancing our responsibility, without promoting our happiness. Just follow to the solemnity of a dying hour, the man who has obtained his money by forgetting his Saviour, and, not content with this, has withheld it from the claims of religion and humanity. Why does he turn pale, and quiver like an aspen, when he stands on the edge of the grave? Why has the bed of down, the silken canopy, the ornamented chamber, so often attested the anguish of unpardoned guilt? Why have we heard, even from the lips of expiring royalty itself, "Millions, millions of treasure for an inch of time." To this solemn hour, each of us, my hearers, is hastening—an hour we ought ever to remember, when a single shilling, unjustly obtained, will weigh like a mountain on the soul; and when all that we can call our own, will be what we have given for the relief of the wretched, and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

The apostle reasoned of temperance. You can imagine what he said. You recollect the two individuals to whom he spoke, and the relations they sustained towards each other. And if his fidelity did not shrink from the trial to

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which it was *then* called, you can imagine also what he would have said, had he been preaching in some of our large towns and cities, where a moment's glance may detect any grade of licentiousness, from its most desperate to its most mitigated form. He would have examined that defence of it so boldly urged, and so often appealed to, which pleads the implantation of passions in the human breast, as an apology for their indulgence. He would have taught us that the opinion had originated not from religion, nor morality, nor sober reflection, but from that convenient principle which induces us, after the commission of any deliberate sin, to hunt up considerations to palliate or justify our conduct. He would have told us, that if such sentiments were generally reduced to practice, they would not only call down the curse of God—not only blight all the endowments of the domestic relations, but they would wither society like the Samael of the desert. He would have reminded us that if there be any thing sacred beyond the immediate enclosure of religion, it is the marriage covenant. Unequivocally, therefore, to profane this sanctuary of human life, not merely by a violation of its holiness, but by indulgences, which its sanction alone can justify,—indulgences commonly, indeed, secluded from observation by the shelter of appropriate darkness, but sometimes adopted and retained in the very face of day,—I say it is to set at defiance all that is binding in moral obligation, and all that is valuable and dear in the social compact. And then, that men should throw the blame on their Maker by pleading the tendencies which He has interwoven with their constitution! As well might the drunkard plead the craving appetite in extenuation of his beastly debaucheries. As well might the midnight assassin find an apology for his guilt in the damning disposition which drove him to contract it. No, my hearers, there is nothing in the nature of

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our own propensities—nothing in the silence, or in the sanction of public opinion, which can palliate an approach even to the frontiers of licentiousness. It debases the heart—it corrupts and debilitates the mind. If I may say so, it unhumanises man; and no matter in what community it may be found, or by what examples it may be defended, or under what pretexts or plausibilities it may be sheltered, it never did and never will prevail, unless linked in, sooner or later, with the most tremendous woes that Omnipotence can shed on his apostate world.

The apostle reasoned of a judgment to come, a subject solemnly interesting to all men, but doubly so to those who are invested with the responsibility of influence and rank. I do not wonder, my brethren, that St. Paul improved his opportunity of pressing this point with Felix; for, in the first place, it might have been expected, if he spoke at all, that he would speak the truth; and, in the second, it is with the higher classes of society, most of all, that such considerations are apt to be forgotten, or if occasionally remembered, to be dispatched with little investigation, and less anxiety. Now, if this judgment to come be a reality, and not a fable; if it be a doctrine of inspiration, and not a dream of mythological poetry; it is certain that those who, by moving in an elevated circle, have possessed the means of more extensive usefulness, will find an accumulated account to settle at a future day. Far be it from me to denounce refinement of manners, or the accomplishments of education, or the elegance of polished hospitality. Separated from that genteel, hypocritical, and hollow-hearted insincerity, which is too often swept under the name of fashion, I rejoice in them. But, O when I look at the magnificence of that wealth on which the houseless wanderer may gaze in vain, till the famishings of hunger have emaciated his body, and the coldness of death has begun in his extremities; when I

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see that accomplishment, and beauty, and loveliness, devoted to the decorations of dress, and bewildered by the pursuit of amusement, which might be bending over the couch of decrepitude and pain, and cheering the loneliness of unbefriended poverty, and consoling the distress of helpless and desponding widowhood, and instructing the ignorance of unprotected orphanage, and wiping the tear from the cheek of affliction, and pointing the eye of the expiring sufferer to the rest that remaineth for the people of God; when I find men of intelligence and talents, men who can so easily inform the mind, and interest the feelings, and captivate the heart; when I see them absorbed in the concerns of the world, with not a prayer to raise to their Saviour, not even a tear to shed over his sufferings, and apparently as unmoved and secure as if they had made a compromise with God; and when I see the poor, the humble, the illiterate of both sexes, looking up to their superiors, watching all their movements, and moulded, especially in sin, by their examples, O, I cannot repress the recollection that there is a judgment to come, when the rich and the poor meet together, and when God, in the presence of an assembled universe, will verify His declaration, that "to whom much has been given, of him will much be required."

Felix trembled. Felix was a man, but the hardihood of his character gave way. He was an heathen; he had never sat under the droppings of the sanctuary,—but he had a conscience. Drusilla was a woman, but the tenderness of her sex remained unmelted. She was a Jewess. She had been cradled in the principles of religion, but she heard the preacher without emotion, and without remorse. Felix trembled; and we learn in the sequel that he sent the apostle away. How inconsistent is guilt. If he disbelieved what his prisoner said, why did he tremble? And if he believed it, why did he send him away? Because that prisoner had

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penetrated to the very core of his heart; he had laid it open to his view, festering in all the gangrene rottenness of unrepented sin, and then he had followed up the alarming disclosure by drawing aside the veil from the invisible world, and revealing the Judge of quick and dead, armed with the retributions of eternity. No wonder he should tremble. Here it is that the slumbering conscience awakes from its lethargy. Here it begins to smother its own remonstrances, to stifle the struggling convictions of guilt, to dispute every inch of ground with the Spirit of God. Here it is that impenitence begins to startle at its own security. When the painted shadows of deceit have flitted from the world, and left it undisguised, in all its emptiness and all its deformity, the soul recoils from its embrace, and shudders at the dangers it discloses. How often has this mysterious power of conscience humbled the proudest self-righteousness into the dust. How often has it prostrated the hostility of the carnal heart, and animated its ruins with the activity of Christian love! How often has it arrested the career of debauchery and vice, and led the sinner to the Cross on which his Saviour expired! Go to that secure and contented moralist, who has begun to feel the grasp of the Holy Spirit. Ask him if he yet reposes on his own merit. Inquire if he is still clinging to the tranquillity of self-righteous confidence. No; he lies like a criminal at the feet of Jesus. He sobs out the confession of his guilt, and pleads for mercy, and mercy alone. Follow the awakened worldling into the seclusion of solitude. See him inventing expedients to drown his reflections. Hear that groan, which bursts through the artificial gaiety of his appearance, and betrays the concealment of inward suffering; or, perhaps, in some moment of thoughtful solemnity, when no mortal eye can witness his humiliation, he bends his stubborn knee, and lifts an half-reluctant prayer to his Saviour. Go to the death-bed of the

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infidel. What is it that has silenced his blasphemy and profaneness? What has thrown that anxious, and inquiring, and dissatisfied look into his dying eye? What makes that icy chill of horror to shiver along his arteries, when he feels that he is going, and the brink of eternity seems to break under his feet? This is none other than the majesty of Heaven's truth; it is the power of conscience. And, my hearers, could not some of us, if we would, attest the invincibility of its influence? Could we not tell of the solemn hour, when, retired from the temptations of company and mirth, some still small voice has whispered in our ears, that we were born for eternity? Could we not tell of the time when the fresh grave of a parent or a child, a brother or a sister, has sent forth the almost audible admonition, "Be ye also ready?" Could we not tell of the hour when our sins were arrayed against us; when the distance seemed almost annihilated between us and the judgment, and the soul shrunk into the dust before an holy God? Could we not tell of some sermon that had invaded our security, some solitude that had witnessed our tears, some sickness or danger that had recorded our resolutions of repentance? And, perhaps, even while I speak it, these recollections are rising before us, and we are urging them back, we are forbidding them to recount the promises we have broken, and the mercies we have abused,—we are ascribing to animal weakness the unwelcome impressions of the Holy Ghost. Who knoweth but some of us are at this very moment rallying all the hardihood of impenitence to crush the convictions of guilt, to brave down the painful story of our sins, to silence the remonstrances of conscience, till we can once more return to the world, and forget that we were made for immortality? Felix trembled, and sent the apostle away. God only knows whether he has seen him since! Let us tremble; but—

You will understand the rest. Amen.

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SERMON III.

"He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself."
1 *John* v. 10.

St. John, my brethren, was the last of the apostles. Before his death, which was nearly seventy years subsequent to our Saviour's, the infant Church was corrupted by heresies, to an alarming extent. On these the venerable old man had long fixed his eye. He was anxious to counteract and arrest them. He saw how rapidly they were spreading. He felt the solemn obligations which rested upon him as the only surviving member of the family of Christ. With such inducements, therefore, he took up his pen in the decline of life, and wrote the epistle from which we have selected our text. Among other topics of discussion, we find in the 5th chapter, the subject of *faith* introduced. This was the basis of the Gospel, the key-stone of the arch; if men were right here, they might with comparative safety be wrong elsewhere. But to be radically wrong here, was certain perdition. Because St. Paul says, "It is by faith we are justified." And so says St. John, in the commencement of this chapter, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." But what does he mean by *believeth*, which is also a very important word in our text? Does he intend a blind assent of the mind to something of which it has no proof? No—our Creator has never required us to credit anything, without sufficient reason; and if such a sentiment were found within the lids of the Bible, it would go to prove more than the strongest argument ever yet invented, that it could not be the word

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of God. Does the apostle hold out the idea, that faith consists in being convinced by what are commonly called the evidences of Christianity? Certainly not; for to believe in this way, was required by candor and common sense, no less than by religion. There were then, as there have been ever since, multitudes of such believers, who were notoriously wicked. So that, although this faith was *necessary* to a pious man, it was not *peculiar* to a pious man. And besides, through the whole of what St. John has here spoken of saving faith, he has not hinted at the evidences of Christianity external, internal, or collateral. Instead of this, he deems it enough to affirm, that "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." "If," says he, "we *receive* the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself." As if he had said, "we are bound, undoubtedly, to credit suitable testimony, when coming from men; but there is an evidence higher than this: when we possess saving faith on the Son of God, we shall have a witness in ourselves, greater than any human witness can be, that Christianity is indeed a system of Divine truth." But let us examine the passage we have recited, more in detail. Let us briefly consider, 1st, The *nature* of saving faith—"He that believeth;" 2ndly, The *object* of saving faith—"On the Son of God;" 3rdly, The particular consequence of this faith, which the apostle intends by the words "hath the witness in himself."

1st, The nature of faith. This term strictly denotes only the assent or persuasion of the understanding. In accuracy of language, the feelings which any proposition excites, are entirely distinct from the act of the mind, in receiving or rejecting it. Thus, a man may believe something which he dislikes, as really as something which he approves. Nor does bare intellectual assent ne-

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cessarily involve the state of the affections at all. We have already alluded to that kind of faith which was termed a *blind assent*. Let us take an example of this. Here is a man who has been accustomed to practise and promote morality. If you will, he has been upright in his dealings, regular at church, and respectful towards sacred things. But he has never examined the evidences of Christianity. He assents, because others assent; he has a confused, indefinite sort of belief, which he has derived from a combination of circumstances, such as tradition, education, or the society to which he belongs. Now, my brethren, it would be wasting time to prove, that this man has not a saving faith; he might rather inquire whether he has any faith. For how does his belief of religion differ intrinsically from his belief of some doubtful story, handed down from his ancestors, which he credits on the same ground, merely because others do it? But you will say, the results of the two cases are not the same. The one makes him a better man, the other is indifferent. Very true, and if it were morality instead of faith that justifies, the argument would be good. But we may suppose circumstances in which a man's vices shall be restrained, and his external conduct improved by believing what is really not true. Yet, who does not see that this can never determine the reasons of his belief? There is another kind of faith, arising from a process of reasoning, which receives Christianity after investigating its evidences. By this, we acknowledge the Bible to be the word of God, on the same general grounds that we admit any human production to be the work of its reputed author. Now, waiving farther explanation, let us for a moment inquire whether this be a saving faith. Observe, then, that if *it be* a saving faith, the mass of mankind have not the means of acquiring it. There are very few who are able to examine the subject closely for

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themselves—the rest believe on credit, which is, in a greater or less degree, a blind assent. Again: If this be a saving faith, who will deny that evil spirits possess it? St. James assures us, that in some sense they do believe; and indeed, it is highly probable that they have a knowledge of the evidences of religion, more clear and minute than the most laborious human inquirers can obtain. Again: If this be a saving faith, God has exacted of his creatures, as a condition of salvation, that, and that only, which does not necessarily affect either the state of the hearts, or the tenor of their lives and conduct. Again: If this be a saving faith, how comes it, that multitudes, and perhaps many in this house, profess the firmest belief in the sacred Scriptures, and yet know and acknowledge that they are not truly pious? Again: If this be a saving faith, why do the inspired writers speak of it as the substance of things hoped for, as working by Love—as purifying the heart—as overcoming the world. Surely, the faith to which we are alluding may be cherished without all these appendages. It requires no more exercise of hope—no more love to God—no more purity of heart—to believe the Bible as a matter of fact and argument, than to believe any other book in the same way. No, my brethren; that faith which the great God, in the economy of grace, has appointed as the condition, or, more properly, as the instrument of salvation, is of another kind still. It is a work of the Spirit of Christ in the sinner's heart—it is the effect of a supernatural agency. I know that such a faith has been called the offspring of enthusiasm—an appeal to the credulity of mankind. I know, too, that behind some such pretence as a supernatural light, enthusiasts and fanatics have generally taken refuge. But all this proves nothing to the point. What doctrine of Revelation has *not* been distorted and abused? Where shall we find any thing valuable without its counterfeit?

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—where a substance without its shadow? If saving faith be not wrought by the Spirit of God, why do the sacred Scriptures assure us, that it is the Holy Ghost who gives us hearts to understand, eyes to see, and ears to hear—who bestows on us a sound mind—opens the eyes of our understandings, and teaches us from the Father? Why do they assure us so plainly, that faith is never a meritorious act on the part of the Creation, which is plainly predicated on the supposition, that the Divine Spirit is concerned in implanting it? Indeed, my brethren, there is no principle in the sacred volume more distinctly recognised than this. It is the citadel of gospel truth; and he who can boldly deny that "By grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God," may as well deny that there is such a duty as faith required. After all, it will be replied, "Admitting this representation, why is a supernatual agency *necessary?* May not a man truly and firmly believe without it? And if he may, where lies the distinction between a *common* and a *Divine* faith?" This question has long since been answered by the apostle Paul. "The natural man," says he, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." It seems then, from this passage, that the true Christian receives the sacred Scriptures in some sense of which the unregenerate are ignorant. And it is such a *spiritual* sense in which he discerns and embraces the truths of the Bible, that distinguishes a saving from a common faith. This distinction, my brethren, cannot well be explained to the satisfaction of all. A pious man will comprehend it, because, with him, it is an experimental thing. But to one who is unregenerate, although he may admit that the distinction exists, it is impossible to convey an adequate view of it, for the same reason that it is to give to a blind man an idea of colors. It is one of those subjects, of which, in the

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nature of the case, the mind can form no just conceptions. There is, however, an expression in St. John's gospel, which may help us on this point: "The Spirit," says our Lord, "shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." And this, it appears, is enough. Only let the truths of the sacred Scriptures be shown to us spiritually, and we receive them of course. When we see any thing to be true, it is impossible that we should not believe it. So also of the affections. No man is opposed to the character of God after a true and spiritual discernment of it. His opposition arises from his *ignorance* of it; for, when we see any thing to be lovely, we always love it, just as when we see any thing to be true, we always believe it. And this is evidently the reason that the sacred writers have uniformly connected the love of God with *saving faith*. Because it is, strictly speaking, no part of faith—it must be viewed as a distinct exercise. But they invariably go together. When we believe *aright*, *love* is a necessary consequence. He that has no love, has no faith; and he that has the least love, does actually possess saving faith, whether he know it or not. The Christian graces are inseparably connected—where one is wanting, there is *none*,—and where one is found, there are *all*. This is a trait of Christianity, for which, we find nothing like a parallel in any other religion upon earth.

> "From this great chain, whatever link you strike,
> Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike."

But it is time to inquire, 2dly, What is the object of saving faith? When I look over Christendom, and see a multitude of religious sects differing from each other in various points, and each adhering to its own peculiarities, I reflect that some or all of these must be adopting errors. It is very natural, then, to inquire, Can error be the object of saving faith? No, never; it may exist *with* saving faith, but can never be its object. The root may be sound, though

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the leaves and branches are more or less withered. Not that every sect, calling itself Christian, does in fact embrace the fundamental articles of religion, for this would be deciding the nature by knowing the name. But, doubtless, it is hypothetically true, that no one sect in Christendom may be essentially wrong, and yet no one entirely right. There is another question, which has often been asked by the timid and trembling believer, Whether the object of saving faith be our own personal interest in the promises? This, too, we answer in the negative. For there are probably, in every age, some persons truly pious, who do not entertain a hope,—which could not be the case if they must first believe themselves to be included in the list of the redeemed. Besides, the act of the mind which *believes* is antecedent to that which ascertains our interest in Christ; the last only examines the genuineness of the first; the one does something which is commanded, the other inquires whether it really *has* done it aright. And more than all, an appeal may be made to inspiration. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," is the requirement; not, "believe that you believe." The whole tenor of the sacred Scriptures inculcates a different sentiment; and were it necessary, we could quote a variety of passages of the same import with that we have just repeated. For instance: St. John affirms in our text, "Whosoever believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself." And what is this but to say, that the only object of that faith which instrumentally justifies the sinner in the sight of God, is the blessed Redeemer? We take for granted, then, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the object of saving faith. But, perhaps, some one is saying to himself, I have heard all this before, and I believe it; but yet I do not definitely know what is meant by it. Remember, then, my friends, that without sincerely receiving and resting upon Christ for salvation, God can no more dispense a pardon for sin than he

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can falsify his oath. And this receiving and resting upon him must be performed with a view to all his offices of *Prophet, Priest, and King*. When we have an exhibition of our own ignorance, of our total inability by nature to form proper conceptions of the character of God; when we are sensible of that darkness which shrouds us until the eyes of our understandings are enlightened; when we feel the need of light and direction, as much as blind men left without a guide in a pathless and boundless forest,—we are prepared to receive Christ as a *prophet*, to reveal to us the will of God for our salvation. When the Spirit of God thoroughly convinces us that we are sinners by nature and by practice; that we have no power to atone for past guilt, or to yield future obedience; that our souls must be bathed in the blood of the Cross, or perish forever; and when, under this solemn and affecting view of our condition, we cast ourselves over on the arm of sovereign mercy, we receive Christ in the character of priest, to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God. When we are oppressed with the consciousness of our innumerable corruptions, of our tendencies from holiness, and towards sin; of our weakness in conflicting with the world, the flesh, and the devil; of our necessity of some being to lead, to guide, to guard, to encourage, to support us; when we are thus induced to surrender all that we are to the great Head of the Church, then it is that Christ becomes our king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies. And this, my brethren, is what we mean when we say that Christ is the object of saving faith. Without these views,—more strongly marked, indeed, in some, and less in others, but without these radical views of the plan of salvation, Jesus Christ may be the object of that faith which custom forbids us to withhold, or of that which speculation

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and inquiry force us to give, but he never can be the Saviour of our immortal souls.

3dly, The apostle assures us, that he who believes in a saving manner hath the witness in himself. Not the witness of "the Spirit with his spirit, that he is born of God;" for if we read the whole verse, we shall find that St. John is speaking to another point. "He that believeth," says he, "on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the *record* that God gave of his Son." And what is this record? It is the Bible. Is it not, then, the meaning of the writer, that he who believes the Bible properly, has an assurance from on high, that it is the word of God? Such being, as we suppose, the import of the passage, it is proper to say one word concerning the *nature* of this assurance. As it is not the witness of the Spirit with our spirits that we are united to Christ, what kind of witness is it? Some, perhaps, will imagine, that it is one and the same thing with *faith*. But this cannot be strictly true, because there are times when a Christian's faith is very weak, and his hopes low and expiring, and yet his belief of the sacred Scriptures will be as strong as ever. We shall see, however, brethren, by a moment's reflection, that this witness, although not faith itself, is a necessary result from it. For as long as I firmly believe a thing, it is plain there can be no uncertainty respecting it in my own mind. Now, if I believe the sacred Scriptures in a saving manner, and if this belief be the gift of God, does it not follow, that God, at the same time that He imparts the belief, must also remove from my mind all uncertainty respecting the sacred Scriptures,—or, in other words, must give me an assurance that they are true? And here we find an answer to a celebrated objection against professors of religion. "If," says the objector, "an infidel should be reasoning with a Christian against the sacred

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Scriptures, and if the Christian should be fairly beaten in the argument, why does he not, as an honest man, give up the Bible, till he can find better grounds on which to defend it?" Because, my brethren, that Christian has the witness in himself. No matter how illiterate he may be, or how easily puzzled in maintaining his opinions, he cannot doubt what he has been taught by the Spirit of God. Nor is this wilful stubbornness; it arises from the construction of the human mind, and in similar cases the result will always be the same. Suppose, for example, a person were now to appear, who should pretend to a knowledge of the heart; suppose he were to tell one of you all the purposes you had formed, all the secret thoughts and desires you had cherished from the cradle, could any arguments, however specious, or any facts, however unanswerable, convince you that this man was an impostor? No; the whole world could not do it. This, then, is one important reason of the Christian's settled belief in the sacred Scriptures. They show him his own heart, its propensities and its guilt; they inform him exactly what he has been, and what he now is; they exhibit just such a Saviour as he wants; in a word, they teach him more about God, and about himself, than he had ever imagined before. And all these truths, too, are impressed on him by the Holy Spirit. No wonder he cannot doubt. His confidence is a gift of the covenant of grace. It grows out of the nature of religious things, and is fixed as the everlasting hills. For these reasons, seconded by the testimony of sacred Scriptures, *we lay down* the assertion again, that every pious man has an infallible witness in himself of the truth of Christianity. And indeed, brethren, might we not presume beforehand, that if God designed to give a revelation to His creatures, adapted to the capacities and conditions of all, He would accompany it with some such witness? For how few men are there who can, at a moment's warning,

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marshal the great principles of reasoning against the objections of scepticism and wit? Where would be our Christians, if each of them must be able in subtlety, argument, or intelligence, to contend with David Hume or Lord Shaftesbury? No! when we read that God is no respecter of persons; that to the *poor* the gospel is preached, and not merely to the disputers of this world, it is the dictate of common sense, that this gospel must in some way carry the stamp of its own divinity with it. Suppose our salvation depended upon believing the science of astronomy, can you imagine that the majority of men could investigate the evidences of the revolution of the earth, the fixedness of the sun, or any similar truth? If not, they must either yield a blind assent, or the Creator must impart to this truth some quality which shall be *in itself* convincing. Let us, then, apply this to the subject of religion. Let us contemplate the actual construction of society, and ask if, instead of being astonished that the Christian has the witness *in himself*, we should not rather be astonished if God had left him without it.

Thus much for antecedent probability. With this accords the whole scope of inspiration. It is the "Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." "But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus." "God hath revealed unto us by His Spirit the things that He hath prepared for them that love Him." "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God." But we need not multiply proof. If our text stood alone in the sacred volume, it would remain eternally true, that "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." And what, my brethren, has experience to say on the point at issue? I am pressing this subject farther, for the use of those with whom a Christian's faith, especially if found in the lower classes of society, passes for enthusiasm; who stigmatize him with the name

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of bigot, fanatic, adherent of the Church, and a thousand other epithets, as foolish as they are profane:—just as if the joke of impiety, or the sneer of laughing ignorance could move a Hope anchored on the Rock of Ages.

We repeat it then,—What has experience to say? Examine the testimony of pious men from the first century to this very Sabbath. I do not mean all who have laid claim to piety, but I mean those who are known by their fruits,—men of that cool and cautious character which does not affirm things at random,—men, in a word, whose assertion the boldest infidelity dares not disbelieve. Ask them, if they have not, in their own breasts, a witness of the truth which no enthusiasm could occasion and no reasoning impart? They will answer yes. They will say, that whatever doubts they may have of their personal piety, they are never permitted deliberately to doubt the Bible. And shall their reiterated and overwhelming testimony go for nothing? If it does, we must abandon the common rules of judging, and be infidels in spite of ourselves. Cast your eyes one moment over the annals of our religion. Either the witness of which we speak must have been granted to the children of God, or Christian history is an exhibition of human nature, totally new and unheard of. Begin with the apostolic age, and inquire what kind of evidence that must be which was sealed with so much suffering and death. Behold the cells of Roman dungeons, crowded with the incarcerated disciples of Jesus. Survey the preparations of the wheel, the scourge, the instrument of stifling, and every refinement of torture which ingenuity could devise. See the stake thronged by primitive martyrs, writhing amidst its fires. And follow up the course of events—I had almost said, follow it by the track of blood: every-where you may find the friends of the Redeemer hunted down with prices

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on their heads; every-where you may see Heathen altars covered and smoking with Christian holocausts; and this, too, with a cessation horribly rare, from the middle of the first century to the opening of the fourth, when the fury of the tempest was in mercy arrested. Now, let me ask, why does that man, enfolded in flames, leave his dying testimony to the truth of the Gospel? Why does another, with every limb dislocated, with his eyes starting from their sockets, with his nerves and arteries torn up by the pincers, with weeping, entreating, imploring relatives around him,—why does he persist in his opinions, and expire with *Blessed be God* on his lips? And these men in every other situation are sober, judicious, and well-informed men! It is because they have the witness in themselves. Let it not be retorted against this reasoning, that Pagan religions, as well as our own, have had their martyrs. The two cases are not parallel. To die in attestation of what we can fairly prove to be true, and to die in attestation of what may be fairly proved to be false, are different things; for, in believing something which is really false, we must, as to that point, be ignorant. And hence it is, that Heathen martyrdoms, (and we appeal to history for what we say,) in every country, and every age, have been owing to the most deplorable ignorance. Only let the disciple of Juggernaut be once instructed, and he never will think of throwing himself under the wheels of his idol. But what instruction will you give a Christian for such a purpose? Has not Christendom always been the most enlightened portion of mankind, and from it have not Christian martyrs been selected? And yet, with all their light, all their advantages, all their good sense, multitudes of the pious have been compelled, and the rest have held themselves ready, to seal their faith in the Gospel with their blood. Is it then remarkable, to believe

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that God communicates to such men a supernatural witness of the religion they embrace? But we will pursue the subject no farther.

My dear brethren: In the truths which have now been announced, we have each a personal and an eternal concern. When I look over this audience, and reflect on the diversity of character which it exhibits,—when I imagine what a dreadful separation would ensue, were the heavens to ring with the Archangel's trump before you rise from those seats,—I confess my feelings are very solemn. Destined, as I probably am, to meet you no more till the resurrection, what shall I say? How shall I speak to you for the last time? Would to God I could address you all as real Christians. For them every promise in this Bible was written. In their felicity, all the changes of Nature, all the movements of Providence, all the exhibitions of grace, will finally result. Mind it not, then, disciple of Jesus, when the mistaken worldling shall brand you with the charge of credulity. You have *here* a security against delusion—a witness in yourself which the world can never give, and, thanks be unto God! can never take away. Believing in Christ, you may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Lift your eye to the sceptre of mercy, and remember that the first and feeblest exercise of Gospel faith makes your salvation as sure as if you were now in heaven.

But we must change our language. Not to aggravate the misery of the impenitent. Ah, no! that cannot be. Were the sky to open this instant, with its descending Creator, you would see that your case can have no coloring too high. Hear ye not the voice of the Deity, "He that believeth not shall be damned"? O! God of mercy, what a sentence! And yet will you sleep? *Have* YOU *believed?* Where, then, is the witness in yourselves? Can you ap-

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peal to the Searcher of Hearts, that you have it? Or rather, can you stand unconcerned on the breaking brink of eternity, and confess you have not? Will you dream along till the thunders of the judgment crash over your heads? Votary of fashion! lover of wealth! admirer of genius! man of the world!—who has told you that next Sunday you will not be laid in the dust? And yet will you sleep? Go for one hour into the silence and solitude of the closet, compose your feverish mind, ponder on the meaning of immortality, call up before you the glories of heaven, and contrast them with the agonies of final despair. And yet will you sleep? Follow that procession which moves towards the hill of Calvary. Yonder he is, driven on by a shouting infuriated crowd. He reaches the ground faint, and bleeding, and exhausted. Unmoved by his sufferings, the executioners raise him up, and nail him to the Cross. ——That was your Saviour. There he hung for three long hours;—then the sword of Justice was buried in his heart;—there he expired. Standing on that same Calvary, methinks the angel of the everlasting Gospel proclaims this day, in your ears, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." And yet will you sleep?—Can you sleep?—Dare you sleep?

May God add his blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

July 5, 1817.

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SERMON IV.

"We have thought of Thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple."

Psalms, xlviii. 9.

And where, my hearers, if not in the temple, shall the loving kindness of God awaken and employ our recollections? Where ought the hallelujahs of praise to burst from our lips, if it be not before the mercy-seat, which embodies into one view all the magnificent provisions of Divine grace, and throws over the transientness of this world's pleasures, the high and holy hopes of immortality? I know, indeed, that even here, we may remain unimpressed. The career of thoughtlessness in the human heart is sometimes too impetuous for any place, however awful, or any motives, however affecting to restrain. But, I also know, that if we could rouse ourselves to-day from our lethargy; if we could adapt our feelings at all to the considerations which are presented to inspire them; if we could assemble before us in their native glory, the great and the lofty attributes of the Godhead, and become absorbed by the presiding solemnities of His presence, and lost in the amazing displays of His majesty and grandeur;—if, besides this, we could appreciate the august and imposing character of the present occasion, and the impressive recollections it is suited to recal; if we could look, as now we may look, at a whole nation celebrating the *day of its birth*—and then see one of its greatest cities suspending the triumphs of the festival, to consecrate to Omnipotence *another place for his worship*—and then, while we are doing this, compute the immense interest which posterity may

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have at stake in the transaction—and calculate how much we may now be helping on those mighty instrumentalities by which God himself is pledged to enlighten and *enrapture the earth with the exhibitions of his glory*;—I say, if with such views we could cluster around the altar of worship, we should feel that our proper business here is one general thanksgiving—and we should lay aside for the time, all the littleness of our worldly wishes, and all the frivolity of our worldly enticements—and we should take up the resolution of the text, to think of the loving kindness of God, in the midst of His temple.

I have not hinted at our National Anniversary for the purpose of travelling back to the events which preceded and occasioned it; for I hope, in heaven, the lapse of forty-three years has blotted them from our memories. I would not willingly think, and much less speak, of that gloomy period which palsied the charities of a previous alliance, and unsheathed the sword of war, and laid out for it the work of desolation and blood. But there is one thing, which, at such a time as this, I am compelled to do—and that is, to thank my God for the blessings which He has poured so profusely over the land of my birth. I thank Him for the splendid success, which nearly half a century has shed on the experiment of American Independence. I thank Him for the institutions of that country, where law is but beneficence, acting by rule, and comfort one of the necessaries of life. I thank Him for that Government which hangs out the signal of friendship to the exile, and throws around him the moment he touches our shores, the shelter of a free and equal constitution. I would not forego the opportunity, even in the temple, of tendering my gratitude for mercies so high; and yet I know not, but we ought rather to drive out our feelings from all the localities of soil, and rejoice in a consideration still more important;—rejoice, I mean, that

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the olive branch has so long budded on the spot where once it was blasted, and that between two countries of the same origin, and language, and habits, and reciprocating so many resemblances of character and policy, there is resumed the attitude of amicable relations. It is true, indeed, that, in the progress of events, a cloud has once risen and burst over the cordialities of our peaceful intercourse; but it is gone, and I hope it is forgotten, and I trust it will operate only like a storm in the natural world, to purify the atmosphere through which it passes. The interchange of friendly feeling is once more restored. The basis on which it rested for thirty-six years without interruption, is again established, and it is a call for our warmest thanksgiving, that the little period of contest which has just gone by, is calculated to brighten, rather than obscure, the prospect of future harmony. Nor is this all: The single fact of peace between Great Britain and America is not the only consolation we can claim. There is one still richer engrafted on the union of their efforts in the cause of Christianity. They have both changed their employment. They have turned aside from the arena of conflict, to combine the tremendous strength of their moral resources. They have hidden the sword in its scabbard, and taken up the Bible, to extend and facilitate, and multiply their remaining conquests. And what, let me ask, what is there glorious on earth, if it be not to see two of its greatest and loftiest nations travelling hand-in-hand through the rest, and leaving in their footsteps the blessings of Christian hope, and proclaiming, as they move triumphantly along, the tidings of life and immortality, brought to light in the Gospel?

But apart, my hearers, from these reflections, the great weight of our text falls directly on *ourselves*. It demands our gratitude, not only *in* the temple, but *for* it—for the presiding Providence that has erected these altars, before

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which we are now assembled to worship. I speak not the language of sectarianism: so far from it, I wish on this occasion, to merge all the attachments of private belief in the contemplation alone of Catholic Christianity. But, after I have done so—after I have trampled every sectarian partiality under my feet, I cannot help rejoicing, and calling on you to rejoice, when this or any other city presents to the living God, a new habitation for His holiness. Do you ask me why? Because such an event tells us, that the religion of the Bible is gaining ground; and because, when we come to open the Bible, we find a *morality the most pure*, and a *piety the most exalted*—and every man is bound to rejoice in the salutary influence which these two considerations put forth over community; and in the splendid retinue of benefits and blessings, which they lead along with them into every department of life. I say, a *morality the most pure*. It were easy to delineate the character of the New Testament—the good feeling it has put abroad among men—the public charities it has brought into being—the purifying process it has carried on in the lower classes of society—the rescue it has afforded to woman from that debasement to which heathenism had consigned her—and, in short, the collected blaze of light it has poured over the darkness it came to irradiate—and the vice and ignorance it found to reclaim—(or by inverting the picture, we might discover the accumulated miseries from which it exempts us. We might imagine that it had never crushed the altars of idolatry, nor smothered the fires of human sacrifice. We might conceive that we were now entombed in the horrors of Paganism, and that an involuntary castu had chained us down to despair; and that the Mississippi, which rolls by us, was the Burrampooter or the Ganges; and that this volume was the Shaster, and this holy place the temple of Juggernaut, strewed with the bones, and stained with the

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blood of innocence! and that on retiring to our homes, the cry of death should break in on the repose of our families, and give us the terrible warning, to furnish the funeral pile with its victim. We might, I say, conceive all this; and we owe it to the New Testament alone, that the details of reality are not added to the awfulness of the thought.) But I will waive these considerations and compute only by the arithmetic of our own experience. Suppose then, and God knows how easily we may—that we are surrounded with disease, and indigence, and misery. What are we to do? Why, the morality of the Bible must come forward to our aid; it must awaken the sympathies of public feeling; and it must rally the energies of a general benevolence; and it must send its almoners into the place of suffering, with the active philanthropy fitted to console it; and it must despatch its agents through all the extended empire of wretchedness, to answer the demands of its wants, and to cheer the solitude of its degradation. This, and this alone, is the way in which the views of enlightened humanity can be accomplished. Suppose, again, that there be lurking in society, any given amount of vice, *e. g.* that the Sabbath is violated, and the gaming table thronged, and the career of licentiousness and debauchery indulged. What is to be done now? What method can the judicious spectator of life devise for compassing the work of reformation? Why, my hearers, he must start from the threshold with the morality of the Bible. He must build a church of God and assemble in it all the friends of intelligent virtue, and make and keep them acquainted with each other. He must give them a sort of weekly rallying point for their exertions, and get them to interchange their feelings and views, and to back with the phalanx of the whole, the well-balanced activity of individuals; and when he has done so, he must bring the prodigious weight of their collected character to

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bear at once upon any public object which may call for it; and who does not see that in this way the gambler, and the libertine, and the drunkard, will be more certainly and more thoroughly put down, than they could be by the bayonets of a thousand armies. I repeat, therefore, that in its moral aspect alone, the religious festival we are celebrating, demands our gratitude; and separated, if it were, from every other incitement, the duty of the text is binding in full force upon us, to think of the goodness of God, in the house of His habitation. But I go further—I have said that the Bible discloses a *most exalted piety*. It tells us that we are sinners; and unlike reason or philosophy, it does not stop there; it holds out the offer of pardon; it pours the blood of atonement on the fires of the wrath of God; it lays open all the lofty arrangements of Divine grace, by which He may now be just, and yet, the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. O, my brethren, this pardon of sin, which we so often hear of, is not imaginary. It is not the flourish of an heated rhetoric. It is, if there be one in Heaven, or on earth,—it is a real transaction. The sword of Justice just leaping to bury itself in the bosom of a lost world, has been arrested by Jesus Christ, and driven back to its scabbard; and to the most fearless and abandoned guilt, the Gospel is now reaching forth the proposals of forgiveness, enforced by all the urgencies of argument, and all the tenderness of compassion.

Here, then, it is that I arrive at what I mean by the piety of the Bible. Here the obligation meets me in all its emphasis, to think of the loving kindness of God in the midst of His temple. Because, when I come up to that temple, I can bring with me the sorrows of the week, and get them consoled and sanctified. When I come here, I can learn that my indigence, or my obscurity, which shuts me out from men, does not bar me from the Cross of a Saviour.

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When I come here, I can kneel at the foot of the altar with the anguish of a laboring conscience, and catch, through the sobs and the prayers which implore it, the whisper of mercy. In a word, when I come, like a penitent prodigal, into my Father's house, I can see Him exchanging the preparations of punishment for the splendors of a festival, and instead of the sentence of death, I can hear Him sending through the ranks of a rejoicing family the blessed intelligence: "This my son was dead, but is alive again; he was lost, but is found!" I am aware that such things to the levity of worldly pleasure will sound like declamation. But even levity is sometimes convinced. It is not always proof against the overwhelming power of the Bible. I have known the most thoughtless arrested, and the most towering humbled. I have seen the hardihood of scepticism, and the pride of high-born beauty, and the long-licensed dominion of indulgence, on their knees at the feet of Christ. I have been where the veterans of impenitence, with hearts that never felt, and lips that never prayed, and eyes that never wept, have melted into the docility of childhood around the Cross on which their Saviour expired. And little as we may now think of it, what may we not witness at some future time among ourselves? Who can tell but our God will sooner or later commence here the same renovating process, and shower down into our hearts the same omnipotent and refreshing energies of His Spirit? Who knoweth but the voice of the Almighty may one day ring through this very church, and electrify every pew where you are now sitting, with the resistless mandate, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Do not call an anticipation like this the dream of Utopianism. It may turn out to be the precursor of waking and sober reality. Perhaps *we* may live to see, and, if not, those who assemble here when we lie in the dust, may see that in rear-

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ing this edifice, the God who presides in it was only carrying on the mighty purposes of His grace, and gaining from among our future citizens and families a new enlistment for the eternal worship of His glory. And, my hearers, we need not stop even here. There is a still loftier theatre on which our conceptions may legitimately range. Survey for a moment the prospects of this city. Compute the population it must collect, and the imposing attitude it must rapidly assume. Embody all the ten thousand geographical adjustments which mark it out for greatness. Think what a commanding influence it must wield over the almost measureless country which depends upon it; and then say, if its religious character be not of the last importance. Say if every church that decorates its surface does not call for gratitude. Say, if we may not expect, when the heart is sound and healthful, that the blood it propels through the system will partake of its purity. Ah, brethren, this is one of those subjects which mock the details of calculation. It rises under our hands to a magnitude that overpowers us; and that man has never travelled at all into the conjectures of coming ages, who does not feel that we are entrusted, in some sort, with the concerns of posterity, and that New-Orleans is a kind of moral light-house, on which, according as we now kindle or extinguish the proper fires, we may wreck or we may rescue the hopes of an unborn and countless population. But, my hearers, I must hasten to apply my text. And yet, what can I say? Of the loving kindness which we so eminently share, I am sure we cannot but think: and what other duty does the passage impose? I know of but one: and that is, that we should not think of ourselves alone. On the transactions of this day the whole Church of Christ is looking, and it is right we should cherish a reciprocal solicitude for her welfare and her success. No, I do not mean solicitude; blessed be God, she has gone too

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far for that. She has palsied too many arms, and won too many triumphs, to allow a single anxiety for the issue. Have you ever heard, my brethren, of the names of Nero and Dioclesian? Have you forgotten when Christendom was filled with the eagles of the Roman empire? Do you recollect the day when the shores of the Mediterranean were inundated by the Pagan barbarism of the Goths? Do you remember the conspiracy which was gotten up in the last age among the German states, and that, too, with imperial power at the head of it, to demolish the throne of Jesus Christ? And where, all this time, was the Church? Why, she went on her way rejoicing. She walked steadily forward in the light of her own magnificence and glory. She dashed aside the artillery which was aimed at her life, and through the very columns that were sent to oppose her, she opened her splendid path to the dominion of the civilized world. It is not, therefore, with a feeling of solicitude, but of exultation, that we may regard the prospects before her. She is sure of victory, for the Lord her God in the midst of her is mighty. She has not lived so long to be finally destroyed. She has not mocked at the opposition of eighteen centuries, to be at last stripped of her laurels, and beggared into terms. Were I speaking as a man, I would say Christianity must triumph; because she has enlisted the affections of all who know her: she has wiped the tear from the cheek of sorrow, and soothed the sobbing bosom of bereavement: she has built poor-houses for want, hospitals for sickness, and asylums for widowhood and orphanage. Were I speaking as a philosopher, I would say Christianity must triumph; because she has pressed into her service the most powerful principles of human nature: the array of all the moral and religious feeling in community is marshalled on her side: she can arm herself at a moment's warning, with an intelligence which no stratagem can decoy, and

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a friendship which no threats can enfeeble or alarm. Were I speaking as a Christian, I would say Christianity must triumph; because the promise of God leads her onward: she is sheltered by the protection of Omnipotence: she has begun her colossal march, and the man who dares to throw himself before it will inevitably be crushed to atoms: she has carried the intrenchments of infidelity, and swept away its pride, and she will do it again; and I would sooner, far sooner, bare my bosom to the lightnings of heaven, than lay a single finger on the Church, to arrest the career of her destinies. The truth is, there is a "time set to favor Zion," and unless God Himself be dethroned, that "time must come;"—Christianity has buckled on her armor, and challenged the conflict. The altars of Paganism are crumbling to dust. Idolatry, gorged and glutted with blood, is halting in its havoc. The war-whoop is dying away through the wilderness. The sentinels on the walls of Jerusalem are waking from their slumbers. The Everlasting Gospel is pressing forward with the banners of the Cross, and the joyful Church, standing on the field she has won, is shouting Victory. This day, my hearers, we are called to swell her triumph. This day, let us hail the majestic and animating scene, and think of the loving kindness of God in the midst of His temple. Already is the twilight of millenial glory breaking through the skies. The jubilee is begun. The signals are out. The trumpet has sounded; and the anthem of ten thousand voices is already thundering through the earth, Hallelujah,—for the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. Amen.

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SERMON V.

"And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

Matthew, xxi., 27.

The incident with which these words are connected, occurred soon after our Saviour appeared in the character of a public man. It seems he was teaching in the temple at Jerusalem. The chief priests and elders, deeming themselves the rightful proprietors of every religious establishment, and, more than all, apprehensive that their own influence and interests would be jeoparded by his increasing popularity, assembled in a body, and demanded of him the authority by which he acted. This inquiry would not have been stamped with so much malice and effrontery, but that they had witnessed his miracles,—a circumstance which ought to have silenced them forever, because they unanimously admitted, and, to this day, it is a standing maxim of the Jewish Talmuds and Tarquins, that when a miracle can once be proved, it establishes the collateral approbation of Heaven towards the individual by whom it is wrought. In the case under discussion, our Saviour thought proper to answer the question proposed by the Jewish doctors, by retorting another; and that was, whether John the Baptist was authorised to preach or not,—whether he had acted under the authority of God, or assumed his office from mere worldly views, or sinister motives? This was a point which the chief priests found extremely perplexing. The fact was, that John had predicted Jesus Christ, and uniformly acknowledged his divinity. But, instead of receiving his doctrines, they had treated him with sovereign contempt.

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Now, if, after all this, they should confess that he had been a divine teacher, they would betray the most palpable inconsistency; for it would be immediately asked, why they had not respected and believed him. On the other hand, the dilemma was no less vexatious. If they were openly to say that he had not been inspired, but had imposed upon the people, and was not entitled to confidence, they knew that such an avowal would excite the public indignation, for the great mass of community were persuaded that he was a prophet, and were accustomed, especially after he was beheaded, to revere his instructions. Here, therefore, these self-created judges were taken in their own craftiness. They found themselves completely distanced; of the two only alternatives which were presented, the one would impeach their character for duplicity and guilt, the other would destroy their popularity, and perhaps endanger their lives. Reduced to this unexpected embarrassment, they finally saw that further evasion would do them no good, and acknowledged that they could not tell whether the Baptist was a pious man or not. With all their sagacity and artifice, and wisdom, they found themselves at a dead stand on one of the simplest questions; and that, too, at the very moment when they were attempting to invalidate the truth of Christianity, by stating difficulties and objections which they presumed it impossible to surmount. Our Lord closes the whole conversation with the very appropriate words of the text: "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

My brethren, the sentiment suggested by this passage, viewed in connexion with the history we have just laid open, appears, on the whole, to be this: that the great objections alleged against religion, are found in every department of life, and may be retorted against those who urge them so as to silence their cavils; and that no Chris-

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tian is bound to clear up all the difficulties attending the doctrines of the sacred Scriptures, any more than the man of the world is to explain all the phenomena of Nature, or all the occurrences of Providence. To a spirit of fair and honest inquiry, for the elucidation of any doubt, or the removal of any difficulties, our Saviour would not have replied as he did, to the persons who received the laconic answer of the text. He would have reasoned as was his invariable custom in such cases, on the equivocal or obscure points of his doctrine, in order that timid minds might not stumble over the apparent inconsistencies which they imagined he was teaching. He would have condescended, as he often did, and as the apostles and evangelists did after him, to the meanest grade of human weakness, for declaring, explaining, and enforcing the truths of that Gospel which was bringing life and immortality to light. But when questions were asked him merely for the sake of perplexing his mind, and of triumphing over his confusion and embarrassment,—asked, too, with a temper which pre-supposed that victory, not truth, was the object to be gained, he deemed it proper to answer a fool according to his folly; or, in other words, to retort upon his enemies some inquiries which should reduce them to the same nonplus in which they were so anxious that he should be caught.

And, my brethren, the Lord Jesus was not alone in being attacked by the petulant and unphilosophical objections of little minds. His ministers and his people, in every age, have been placed in the same circumstances—have been challenged to the same field of controversy by the same kind of self-conceited champions; and, therefore, have a most unquestionable right to despatch the whole argument by the same short process of which the great Head of the Church has left them an example, in the words of the

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text. Let us exemplify these remarks. Every man at all acquainted with the world, has heard the most important truths of revelation ridiculed or opposed from the fancied impossibility of reconciling them with the character of God, with human reason, or with the actual condition of mankind. These separate charges have been made particularly in regard to the Origin of Evil,—the Doctrine of the Trinity,—Salvation by Grace,—the Foreknowledge of the Deity,—and Future Punishments. Adopting the language of an objector, let us begin with the Origin of Evil. Moses opens the Pentateuch with a long history of the fall of man. He tells us that our first parents were created holy and innocent. They were then placed in a garden, where, without any assignable cause, a prohibition was issued debarring them from the fruit of one particular tree. Like sheer idiots, however, they ate of that tree, when there was an abundance of others for their use; and when they knew that the curse of God would rest on their conduct. From this period, their Creator, who might have prevented the whole, drove them from the garden; doomed them to labor and suffering; and, not content still, he subjected all their posterity to pain, and labor, and death. And methinks the objector would close his wise remarks by exclaiming, "What a fine story to tell of a pure, perfect, and benevolent Deity!"

Now, my brethren, we, who profess to believe this story, are called upon every day to make it clear and intelligible—to divest it of every thing for which we cannot give a reason—and to reconcile it with our own short-sighted views of propriety. Instead, however, of directly complying with the requisition, let us see, for a moment, what we should gain by setting Moses aside. We certainly do find man, in some cases, sinful—this will be admitted on all hands; for how else shall we account for the crimes, the excesses, the

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abominations, which every succeeding day is unfolding? and in what way can we make these melancholy facts to quadrate with the perfections of God? Had not the Omnipotent Being of the universe power to prevent the wickedness by which our world has been cursed? Again: Look through the earth: we shall find, not suffering alone, but the severest suffering of innocence and virtue—we shall see the great mass of every community compelled to earn their subsistence by the sweat of the brow—we shall behold Death reigning with indisputable sway—invading the peace of families, and peopling the realms of mortality with the trophies of his triumph, without regard to age, or character, or rank. All this we know, independently of the Bible. Let me ask, then, Why shall we find fault with the history of the fall in the Pentateuch? It teaches us that man was made holy, and apostatized from God. Common experience cannot tell us that he was once holy; but it can and does tell us that he is not so now. Moses teaches us that man was driven from Paradise, and condemned to labor and pain. Experience does not say that he was ever in Paradise; but it attests too well his condemnation to labor and pain. The Bible asserts that, in consequence of Adam's sin, his posterity were doomed to suffering and death. Experience, indeed, knows nothing of Adam; but it proves, and that, too, without giving *any* reason for the fact, that the first man, whoever he might have been, is dead, and that his posterity have suffered, and have died, through every successive generation.

Now, I should like that some of the carping enemies of Revelation should furnish some reason for these three things. They are not discovered by the light of the sacred Scriptures—they have nothing to do with the sacred Scriptures. They are those every-day occurrences, which no man in his senses can deny. Why is it, that men are wicked when God might

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have ordered it otherwise? Why is there so much distress in society, when God might have animated every heart with unmingled joy? Why are we all, even infants, subject to death, when God might have destined us to an earthly immortality? Can our enlightened philosophers, who are too wise to believe the believer, afford a satisfactory explanation of these mysterious events? Neither tell I them, nor is any believer of inspiration bound to tell them, why God permitted the fall—why he punished it afterwards—or why, in the language of the Westminster Assembly, all mankind, descending from Adam, by natural generation, have sinned in him, and fallen with him in his first transgression.

But let us glance at another subject, to which we have alluded. I mean the Doctrine of the Trinity. The Christian world is accustomed to believe, that the Deity exists in three persons and one essence. Before I proceed, however, I would remark, that I have never been satisfied with the word *persons* to express the idea intended to be conveyed. Person, in our language, is commonly significant of distinct and separate existence. Among the Greeks and Latins, it was not so. They only meant by it, that distinct existence and separate exercise of modes, attributes, and offices, which should harmonize at the same time with strict indivisibility and oneness of being. And recollect, my hearers, that their vocabularies had provided a word for this idea long before the Christian religion was known. With this explanation, then, we firmly believe the Doctrine of the Trinity. But the caviller may reply, "This is absurd—it is contrary to reason." To say there are three persons in one God, will amount, after all, to the same thing, as to say, there are three Gods. And it does not relieve the difficulty to allege, that by person it is not intended to communicate the idea of a distinct Being; for the

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mind can form no conception of *modal* existence; there is no possible analogy for it in nature; and besides, the phraseology appears to have been adopted merely for the sake of evading the charge of inconsistency and contradiction. So much, brethren, for objections. Without attempting to disprove them, I simply observe: that if Philosophy has ever taught a single truth which cannot be shaken, it is, that we should inquire in religious things, not what is rational and what is not, but what is revealed, and what is not; for we may be assured, no absurdity ever made a part of Divine revelation. But to return: it is said that to be three and one at the same time, in any sense, is impossible. Perhaps not, my brethren. Perhaps every man may find in the structure of his own mind a refutation of that sophistry. For what is *mind?* It is a something composed of reason, memory, and imagination—three powers plainly distinguished from each other. Yet, does it follow, that each individual has three minds? This is no logomachy. Deny, who can. At all events, Mr. Locke, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Reid, have not denied, that each one of these powers is essentially necessary to the existence of the others, and yet perfectly distinct from both. In some sense, then, three may be one, and one three; that they are ever so in the same sense, nobody has said, and nobody believes. And here, the opposer is not on his own ground; he unblushingly charges absurdity on religion; while, if he has the least candor, he finds the same absurdity in his own breast, and is utterly unable to get over it. But in reply to all this, it may be said, as it often has been, that the Doctrine of a Trinity is *incomprehensible*—and that God cannot require his creatures to believe what they cannot understand. Be it so; but recollect, that by the rules of logic, that which proves too much, proves nothing at all. And let me ask, is there nothing out of the enclosure of revelation which is incom-

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prehensible? Let us test the case: A certain class of Atheists will tell us the world is eternal. What think we of something existing which did not begin to exist; neither older now than it ever was, nor younger now than it ever will be? A Deist will confess that God is omnipresent. What think we of a Being who is everywhere at the same time, and neither a part in one place, and a part in another, nor a whole in any place? But why do we multiply examples! The truth is, the human mind was not formed for investigating first principles. I cannot tell what moves my finger. It is true, indeed, that it is owing to an operation of the will; but why that will, which is immaterial, should move my own body, naturally motionless matter, any more than some other substance, is a question which can never be solved. Now, to recur to the objector: He ridicules the idea, that the Godhead includes Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and demands of Christians to explain the mystery. But can he explain the nature of the mind—the attributes of the sacred Being—or even the motion of his own frame? Neither tell we him in what way, according to the confession of faith, there can be in unity of the Godhead, three persons of one substance, power, and eternity.

On some future occasion, with the leave of Providence, we shall consider the remaining articles proposed to be examined by the light of our text, viz: Salvation by Grace, the Fore-knowledge of the Deity, and Future Punishments. For the present, let a single brief reflection suffice. It is this: The sacred Scriptures, although written by none of the cautious and Argus-eyed men of this world, have recorded no fact which history has not more or less verified, and have announced no doctrine which genuine philosophy will not tend to confirm and establish. We have seen every possible effort made—we have seen the whole parades of objections, difficulties, and scruples—we have seen, in every age,

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the troops of Infidelity under arms, to scale the intrenchments of Inspiration—and, particularly within the recollection of us all, we have seen a class of men, some of them in our own country, opposing the recent phenomena of the earth, to the account of its origin in the writings of Moses. But the serpent is under our feet—he is biting the dust and writhing in the slippery coils of his last contortions. Christianity is on her march, and nothing will stop it. She is moving forward; and whoever opposes her progress, will only be crushed to pieces. She throws off the puny efforts of Infidelity, as the majestic lion shakes from his mane the dew-drops of the morning. She asks no armistice or compromise from her enemies; if they will fall into the magnificent procession she is leading, they may yet be received; if not, they must abide the issue. Methinks the celestial bands are this moment waiting to welcome her approach to her native skies. Methinks the seventh Angel has the trumpet to his lips, and is preparing to sound Hallelujah!—for the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

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SERMON VI.

"Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."
Matthew, xxi., 27.

By some of those who are now assembled, these words will be recollected as having been discussed on a former Sabbath. For the information, however, of such as might not then have been present, it is proper to state the connexion in which the passage is found, and the purposes to which it has been already appropriated.

It was on one of those occasions when our Redeemer, alive to the great object for which he came into the world, was teaching in the metropolis of Palestine, that the chief priests and elders surrounded his person and demanded the authority by which he exercised the sacred office. The Lord Jesus, aware that the inquiry was prompted by the basest envy, and not by a regard to the purity of religion, declined giving a direct answer; but, as a kind of apology for his silence, he said unto them, "I also will ask you one thing, which, if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John—whence was it—from Heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say *from Heaven*, he will say to us, Why did ye not then believe Him? but if we shall say *of man*, we fear the people, for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell." You will remark, my brethren, that these men, who were so fond of exacting information from our Lord, were not at all prepared to return the favor. They had despised and persecuted John the Baptist, and were even accessory to his decapitation. One would have thought that they were able,

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at least, to shield themselves from a charge like that, because we all know that when men do wrong, their first object is to hunt up an excuse for themselves; but they could not open their lips,—they were perfectly confounded,—and I presume would have been very glad to have recalled the whole conversation. But Jesus Christ did not let them go till he had administered to them the salutary reproof of the text: "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

The sentiment which I deduce from this reply may be expressed in a very few words. It is, that the objections most commonly urged against religion, apply equally to many other subjects; and that the censorious caviller, who is most fond of charging absurdities upon Christianity, has no right to any other answer than that which the Jews received from Jesus Christ. By this simple standard we have already considered the Mosaic history of the Fall, and the Doctrine of the Trinity. The next topic in order is that of Salvation by Grace, against which the carnal heart has ever been so active in contending. It is a first principle of Evangelical Truth, that our affections are naturally depraved, and that we have in ourselves neither the disposition nor the power to comply with the requisitions of the Gospel. What, then, can be done? If there be no merit in our prayers, our tears, our sorrows,—if even the first-born of our bodies would be no expiation for the sins of the soul,—how are we to escape from our situation? To these questions the volume of truth replies that every thing connected with our salvation is at the sovereign disposal of a just and holy God. It is His power alone that inspires proper views and sentiments within us, and on Him we are dependent for all those exercises which are acceptable in His sight. My brethren, is there no heart present which is ready, this moment, to exclaim, "How, then, can I be guilty for not cher-

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ishing feelings which God alone can impart?" But stop, my friend; before you shelter yourself behind apologies like that, we had better inquire whether this formidable difficulty does not exist in every department of life, as well as in religion? Look a moment into your private concerns. You are engaged in the acquisition of wealth; your plans are devised with caution, and executed with promptness and energy. But suppose that, in spite of all this, a frost should blight your crops—or a fire consume your dwellings—or a wind sink your ships,—events which have often occurred with regard to others,—would you not be willing to acknowledge the sovereignty of God? Would you not consent to affirm of agricultural, or mercantile, or professional life, the very same which the sacred Scriptures affirm of religion—"that Paul may plant, and apostles water, but God must give the increase?" I ask you, when you have seen young men of enterprise and character ruined by some unexpected misfortune in business—when you have known premature insanity to seize and prostrate the most promising genius, and the most vigorous mind—or when, by one of those tremendous dispensations which we are sometimes called to deplore, a whole neighborhood or community are beggared at a blow—deprived of the means of subsistence, and compelled to seek the support of life from the hands of foreign charity, have you not confessed that the blessings of Heaven are not always secured by exertion or merit? Sit down, then, and deliberately contemplate these events. You will find yourself sufficiently occupied in explaining them, without entering the pale of Revelation, and erecting your breastworks against the doctrines which it announces. To all this I anticipate a reply, that, as in the pursuits of business it is requisite only to do all we can, and trust to Providence, or, as it is frequently called, chance, for the result, so in the concerns of the soul, the utmost in our power is the

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use of the appointed means. I admit the reasoning; and, without farther circumlocution, let us bring the question to issue. When you have any favorite commercial object in view, all your energies are concentrated. Hardship, exposure, and pain, are counted of little consequence. Nothing curbs your ardor—nothing intimidates your resolution—nothing retards your efforts. So much for money; and all, too, when you are certain that some casualty or misfortune might dash your hopes in a single day.

Let us now shift the position of the argument. No man in his senses will deny that the soul is as valuable as wealth. But have we cherished a proportional solicitude for securing its eternal welfare? Have we ever encountered hardship or suffering in withdrawing from a wicked world, and seeking the forgiveness of an offended God? and have those duties been prosecuted with diligence and zeal? Have our closets, from day to day, found us on our knees, and attested the sincerity of our supplications? If not, let us beware how we soothe ourselves with the reflection that the sovereignty of God renders our own exertions useless; or, if we do this, let us be consistent, and arraign Omnipotence for not furnishing a fortune to our hands—while, at the same time, we may not think on the subject more than once or twice a week, and then, perhaps, without feeling any anxiety, or making any vigorous effort. In short, while the man of the world is straining every nerve to accumulate riches—and that, too, under the most infallible assurance that it depends on the smiles of Providence entirely whether he succeeds—let him not dare to prefer a charge against Christianity, which, if he would carry it out in the transactions of life, would leave him a penniless pauper. Let him be as eager in his eternal as in his temporal interests, before he pleads his inability to accomplish his own salvation; let him seek till he finds; let him knock till it is opened; and

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then, and not till then, will he be prepared to determine whether God is more sovereign in religion than in the common dispensations of His providence towards mankind.

There is but one other subject to which I shall direct your attention to-day, and that is the Doctrine of Future Punishments. There is probably no passion in the human breast, except such as are distinctively adventitious and acquired, which the sacred Scriptures might not, were they permitted, turn to an important account in religion. Hence it is, that they exhibit so many motives which appeal to our fears, and among them is the certainty of the retributions which await the wicked in a coming world. My brethren, we who participate in the blessings of revealed truth, are taught that there is a day approaching, when they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and come forth; that on this awful and interesting occasion, those who closed their earthly career in impenitence will be doomed to everlasting fire, while the righteous shall shine like stars in the kingdom of their Father. There appear to be two principal views in which this doctrine is obnoxious. It is said, in the first place, that God consults the happiness of His creatures, and therefore cannot willingly give them pain. The supposition would derogate from His benevolence. My brethren, such reasoning would be extremely plausible, were it not contradicted by every day's experience. Now, to suppose that the Supreme Being would allot affliction to virtue and innocence, and yet be debarred by His benevolence from the punishment of guilt, is as absurd in itself as it is hostile to the whole tenor of Inspiration. And is it necessary to enter into a labored proof of the fact, that suffering is dispensed to mankind in this world? No, never till we can give affluence to the needy, hope to the desponding, and succor to the distressed; never, till we can annihilate the agonies of pain, and rob bereavement of its sting; never, indeed, till

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we can burst through the doors of the sepulchre, and reclaim, and re-animate, and re-embrace the decaying corpses of our companions and friends. And, my brethren, does it not impeach the goodness of the Deity, that He has consigned human life to such a melancholy variety of distress? If we are unwilling to impeach His perfections on this account, why are we so slow in believing that He *may*, or, if you please, that He *will*, inflict suffering in a future world; and especially when the last is the positive punishment of sin, while of the first we are frequently compelled to acknowledge that we can give no possible reason? But it is replied, that the character of God will permit future torment, but cannot extend its duration to eternity. Here, then, is a second view, in which the declarations of sacred Scripture become obnoxious to the natural heart. My brethren, if what we have said be true, it will be admitted that a certain degree of punishment is not repugnant to the attributes of the Almighty. Now, suppose an individual, after the transactions of the judgment, to be condemned to a state of suffering. The question will be, whether the Divine perfections require that he should ever be redeemed. Does he, then, become less criminal in proportion to the pain he endures? Certainly not; no such principle is recognised in human jurisprudence. A penalty is never regarded as expiating guilt, but simply as satisfying the demands of the law. To determine the extent of punishment depends, as it does in the government of God, upon a positive statute. But is the individual we suppose to be rescued by a necessary act of benevolence? Why must we believe this, any more than that he should have been kept from punishments in the first place? The same love which is required to terminate his sufferings, might have been displayed in a more striking light by preventing them. Besides, if a redemption should take place, it would be the result of mercy; but God punishes His crea-

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tures as a legislator; and that a legislator should be bound to exercise mercy is a solecism. There is but one other supposition on which future sufferings can be terminated—that it will be effected by an act of sovereignty. But, my brethren, where is the warrant for this? Does the Bible teach any such doctrine? No; the contrary. And from what source have we learnt that God will inflict punishment at all in futurity? Is it not from the Bible, and that alone? Let us, then, be consistent with ourselves, and either deny both, or affirm both. For shall we believe so much of Inspiration as suits our own taste, and reject the remainder? If this be philosophy, it is difficult to say what is not. When, therefore, an objector assails the scriptural doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked on the score of its severity, let him first ask in what way an infinitely benevolent Being can permit present suffering; and what shall prevent the Deity from inflicting it in a future state, any more than in this?—and if it be once inflicted, by what reasoning shall we prove that it will ever come to an end?—and if unassisted reason cannot throw the least light on the subject, which is preferable, to follow our own wild conjectures, or to be guided by the word of the living God? When the caviller shall candidly answer these inquiries, it will be time to defend Revelation—from objections; but if they cannot be answered, neither tell we him how the character of the Supreme Being requires that He should punish a part of His creatures to all eternity.

With Divine permission, the next Sabbath morning will be devoted to the objections so often, and so inconsistently, urged against the foreknowledge of God. My brethren, after all the difficulties, and murmurs, and cavils, which can be urged, if we are ever saved at all, we must be saved by grace. This is the way in which prophets, and apostles, and evangelists have been saved; this is the way in which

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sinners in every age have been enrolled among the children of God; this is the way in which Heaven will be peopled, and in which you and I may yet be admitted to those pure and perfect joys which are laid up for the righteous on high. But, my brethren, except we repent, we shall perish forever. It is true, as God is true. Oh, did I dare to do it, how gladly would I dispense with this part of my message, and appeal only to the feelings of gratitude and love. But hath He spoken, and shall He not do it? From His decision, not all the groans, the prayers, the tears of ten thousand worlds, can effect a moment's duration. How solemn are our destinies! In a few more years, and other assemblies will be listening to the Gospel, and we shall be in eternity! Have we no hope in Christ? Why not? What is our apology? In some hour of leisure let us coolly calculate the price for which we may be bartering our immortal souls.

And may God follow us with His Spirit. Amen.

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SERMON VII.

"Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."
Matthew, xxi., 27.

In these severe and comprehensive words did our Saviour reply to the Jewish rabbis, who scornfully demanded his credentials as a public teacher. He triumphed over their malice,—not by frowning them into nothing, not by exciting against them the popular prejudice, but by gradually leading and leaving them to the mortification of finding themselves completely caught in the snares which they had spread for him.

They had begun by asking questions which they fancied he would be unable to answer. Knowing their motives, the Lord Jesus retorted the attack by stating some questions for their consideration; and when, with much reluctance, they were compelled to acknowledge their incompetency to reply, he promptly told them, in the words of the text, that he did not deem himself bound to remove all the difficulties which they might suggest to him, any more than they were to elucidate some perplexing points which he could mention to them.

In explaining and applying this passage on former occasions, it was remarked, that modern cavillers against religion seem to follow very closely in the footsteps of the Jewish doctors; they are extremely fond of fastening difficulties and objections on the Bible, which they ignorantly or intentionally forget would exist in undiminished force, if the Bible had never been written. The truth of this has been illustrated in reference to several of the Christian doctrines. There remains, however, one of more practical

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importance than all the rest, which shall now be made a subject of investigation,—I mean the Foreknowledge of God.

We are taught in the sacred Scriptures, that although the Supreme Being has offered to his creatures the invitations of the Gospel, and commanded all men everywhere to repent, He possesses the prescience, beyond the possibility of disappointment of the result, in every individual case. He knows, and from all eternity has known, in regard to each human being, what will be his character, what his conduct, and what his allotment, when the Day of Accounts shall arrive. All the complicated events of futurity are inspected by His omniscient eye,—and, in the awful and impressive language of Inspiration, "Hell is naked before Him, and destruction has no covering." Yet we are instructed to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, on the penalty of endless perdition. We are required to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We are admonished of our danger while destitute of a good hope through grace, and entreated to be reconciled to God, with as much earnestness and solicitude as if He were utterly uncertain of the event till it transpired.

My brethren, we need none of us to be told that this doctrine, in every age, has awakened the hostility of the human heart, and been converted into an apology for persevering impertinence. When sinners are informed that their happiness in a future world is suspended entirely upon their piety in this, they will often assent, with great composure, to the truth of the representation, but reply, that the foreknowledge of the Deity obviates the necessity of their exertions. He is perfectly apprised, they will say, of our ultimate destinies,—events which appear contingent to us, are certain to Him; and if so, their certainty was derived from His will;—and although we may be at liberty, in

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some sense, to do as we choose, yet it will always be so ordered, that we shall choose to do the very actions which God knew we should do, before the foundation of the world. In this dilemma, we will await the movements of Providence,—perhaps, in the revolution of things, we may be interested in Christ, but, at all events, the intentions of the Creator will be accomplished,—and whatever might be our exertions, we cannot thwart His purposes, nor change His determinations.

One would think, my brethren, that any man, of the least reflection, must discover the fallacy of this reasoning. If it is adopted at all, it will lead us to fatalism, and, unless we are prepared to follow it to that dreary point, it can be of no advantage. When we consult the testimony of unassisted reason on this subject, it will quadrate with that of the sacred Scriptures. We find ourselves placed by Supreme Providence in this world. Among our first conceptions of a God, it occurs to us that He must be all-wise. Indeed, every possible perfection enters essentially into our idea of Divinity. If, then, He be all-wise, he must foreknow future events,—because, otherwise, every succeeding day would be disclosing occurrences which He had never anticipated,—and which, therefore, must be considered as adding to his stock of knowledge. On the other hand, our consciousness teaches us that the human will is entirely free in its volitions. We all feel the power of choice, when different objects are presented to us. Indeed, our determinations are so aloof from restraint or control, as to have rendered it a proverb among the schoolmen, that no man can ever do what he is unwilling to do; and even if there be a directing influence over our minds, it operates in so secret and mysterious a manner, that we always retain the most indelible impression of our own responsibility. With regard to the Divine Being, then, we must assume His foreknowledge of future

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events as essential to the perfection of His character. With regard to ourselves, we have the evidence of consciousness, confirmed by the universal sense of accountability among men, that we are, in the full meaning of the term, free agents. And of both these truths we may possess the most firm and rational conviction, although the connexion between them is to us, and to all mankind, and perhaps even to angels themselves, buried in impenetrable darkness.

Such, my brethren, is the language of reason. Such were the theories of the most celebrated schools of philosophy before the advent of Christ; and such, purified by the Spirit, and irradiated by the splendors of Revelation, is the doctrine of that Gospel which has brought life and immortality to light. And let me ask, is there any thing attached to it which can be distorted into an apology for indifference to the subject of religion,—any thing which can excuse us for deferring an immediate attention to the concerns of our souls? Let us, then, reason with impartiality, and not permit one part of our conduct to contradict the other. That is a most absurd and inconsistent theory, which, so far from applying to the ordinary purposes of life, is merely invented as a salvo, to which the conscience resorts, for quieting its own rebukes, after contracting the guilt of habitual impenitence.

My brethren, every man in community is engaged in some object or occupation. Whenever we look around us, we discover animation, enterprise, and zeal; and not only so, but, from some strange cause or other, we commonly find industry, sooner or later, crowned with success, while idleness and dissipation almost invariably carry in their train the certainty of ultimate want. Now, the doctrine of the Divine foreknowledge applies, in all its force, and all its entireness, to the pursuits in which we engage, for the acquisition of wealth, as much as to the concerns of eternity. But does

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this important recollections occur to us while we are so eagerly seizing on the doctrine as an excuse for our continuing in sin? How often do we hear men, pretending to great strength of mind, reply to the exhortations of the pious by saying, "It can be of no avail to make exertions, —God is perfectly acquainted with all events,—He foreknows the endless destiny of every being He has created,—and whatever be our wishes, His views cannot be disappointed, nor His decisions reversed." But are these men willing to apply their logic to their plantations, their stores, or their commercial transactions? Will they neglect their crops, because God foreknows whether they will be productive or not? Will they sell their goods without security, because God foreknows whether that security will be safe? Will they omit a speculation, because God foreknows whether it will eventuate successfully? O no! The foreknowledge of God is no difficulty here;—it does not relax a single energy, nor interrupt a single plan. Yet, why not? The Creator does not foresee the destiny of the soul, by one iota, more distinctly than He does the issue of our private business, or mercantile projects. The two cases are exactly parallel, and, so far as this point is concerned, Christianity has taught nothing which the experience of every individual in the world will not confirm. If, then, we are, either secretly or avowedly, procrastinating repentance, under the fatal impression that our whole conduct is known to God, beyond the possibility of change, let us follow the argument as far as it will fairly lead us. Let us halt in the pursuits of human life,—discard the unwearied anxiety which we now feel for reputation and riches, and surrender ourselves as mere machines, to be operated on by those objects which may happen to surround us, or still, more consistently, by no objects at all.

The truth is, my brethren, there is no objection which

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cavillers have ever urged against religion, so little entitled to respect as that to which we allude. Because, when a man unblushingly stigmatises Christianity, and satisfies the remonstrances of his conscience, with a consideration which he knows will apply equally to the minutest concerns of life, he exhibits as equivocal a specimen of his good sense and discernment, as of his piety. And there seems to be no way in which his opinions can claim the shadow of regard, until he consents to be consistent, and abandons the interests of himself and family with as much composure as he evades the requisitions of the Bible. To an objector, therefore, who pretends to be deterred by the Divine foreknowledge, from commencing the work of his own salvation, it is proper to suggest such inquiries as these: Does God foreknow the destiny of his soul in any sense except that in which He foreknows the result of his exertions for temporal advantage? Does he not act in all the situations and circumstances, and transactions of life, as a free agent? And dare he to go before the judgment seat of Christ with no other plea for his impenitence, than that his own efforts must have proved inefficient, from the foreknowledge of God? Can he answer these questions? Neither tell we him in what way the Divine prescience of all events can be reconciled with the entreaties and exhortations of the Gospel, or with the obligations of repentance, under which every human being is laid.

My brethren, it but remains to suggest two reflections from the subject which has now been discussed. The first has reference to the limited powers of the human mind; our Creator has seen fit to restrict our intellectual comprehension within very reduced boundaries. It is true, that over those beings which are beneath us in the scale of creation, we may claim a decided superiority; but it is also true, that in comparison with that gradation of intelligences

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which fills up the vast distance between man and his God, our capacities are extremely feeble and contracted. But there is one consideration which may animate us under the consciousness of comparative inferiority; and that is, that our minds are progressive; they are constantly moving, and forever will be moving, towards a state of perfection. Who knoweth, but one day our invigorated and enlarged conceptions may reconcile all those mysterious doctrines which now wear the aspect of inconsistency? Who knoweth, but they may then appear as clear and harmonious as the simplest truths which now excite our attention? Yes, there may be a period when the most difficult points of Revelation shall be unfolded to us in all their bearings and dependencies, and when, advancing to greater and greater knowledge, we shall seize with facility on subjects which the loftiest angel in Heaven cannot now explain? My brethren, I have never met with the opinion from others, and perhaps have not sufficient reasons for adopting it myself. But I cannot help thinking, that the great motive of our Maker, in requiring us to believe doctrines which we cannot entirely reconcile, is to exercise our faith. He has taught us some things confessedly hard to be understood; and He asks us if we are willing to take His word, or if we will continue to reject it, because it is not accompanied by all the explanations which we might wish; and I do suppose that the child of God, who has humbly and sincerely received whatever the Bible has declared, may enjoy a reward of his faith in the day of judgment, by finding every thing cleared up to his comprehension, while the sinner, who has ridiculed or rejected doctrines, merely because he could not understand them, may learn their consistency and truth at the same awful day, when the discovery will only aggravate his wretchedness for his conduct. But, be this as it may: it is the dictate of philosophy and reflection,

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as much as of religion, that we should believe all the Bible, or none of it. Persons frequently go to church, and complain that the preacher is too severe; and I have no disposition to deny, that Christian pulpits have often resounded too much with the thunders of Sinai. But, my brethren, the best way to decide such questions, is to go with an honest and independent spirit, and examine the Bible. Because, if a minister should profess to preach the word of God, and yet not preach it, it is very certain, that every man of sense, who might detect him, would despise his conduct. And, besides, he is set as a watchman for souls. On him, in no small degree, are resting the everlasting destinies of his people; and ought he to betray his trust? If his hearers think him needlessly or unjustifiably severe, let them take the Bible, and in a familiar manner visit him with their objections. If he is a good man, he will thank and love them for it—if he is an honest man, he will hold himself ready to renounce any opinions which may be erroneous. But, in all our deliberations, and all our difficulties, let us be guided by this great charter which has come to us from on high: What God has written, He has written. It is in vain to oppose Him, or to contend with His sovereignty. There may be some little plausibility in controversies among ourselves, when the chances are nearly equal. But woe unto him that striveth with his Maker. Better wrestle with the oak of the forest—better challenge the hurricane that roars through the wilderness—better breast the lightnings that set the Heavens on fire.

To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. It is the burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? The watchman saith, The morning cometh, and also the night—if ye will inquire,—inquire ye,—return,—come. Amen.

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SERMON VIII.

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

2 *Corinthians*, xiii, 11.

Among the cities of antiquity, there seems to have been none of greater commercial importance than Corinth. Situated on an isthmus, still dignified with its name, between old Greece and the colonies, it communicated through the ancient Ægean Sea, on the one hand, with the ports of Asia, and on the other, through the modern Gulf of Lepante, with the busy shores of Europe. With these immense local facilities, commanding at once all the produce of the peninsula, and all the active capital of the continent, furnished with two fine harbors, which, at the distance of a few miles from each other, opened an intercourse with opposite quarters of the globe, and, besides this, defended by natural barriers which might rival the strength of Gibraltar, we cannot wonder that it attained so exalted a rank for population and wealth.

While this city was climbing to the zenith of her glory, an incident occurred at the eastward, which excited very general attention. A young man of high family, of an elegant and accomplished education, and of uncommon popularity among his countrymen, had renounced his hostility to the Christian religion, and become one of its most devoted advocates and disciples. It was the apostle Paul. Abandoning the profession of the law, in which he had commenced the pursuit of a rich renown, he resolved to be a minister of the infant sect, which was then so ob-

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noxious through the Roman empire. Severe indeed must have been the trial. His design was opposed by all his connexions; it withered, at a blow, every hope of political eminence, and, in some sort, debarred him from those circles of society to which he had been accustomed, and in which his most intimate friends were mingling. To a heart like his, in which every tender and delicate feeling found a home, such considerations could not but be painful. He would have been either more or less than human, had not the ten thousand circumstances which constantly reminded him of his mortifying change of life, awakened some emotion. But his bosom was the sanctuary of his own sorrows. Though he had surrendered all he once held dear,—ease, opulence, reputation, and even the ties of consanguinity,—he did not complain. The Christian triumphed, and the man was conquered. That heroic and regenerated mind which was towering to the conceptions of eternity, could not waste its regrets over the ephemeral trifles which it sacrificed in the ascent. After assuming the heraldry of the Gospel, it became an important question with St. Paul, to what part of the world he should bend his steps. He had been invited by the Church at Jerusalem to become their pastor. Nor was it an inconsiderable inducement, that this would have fixed him in the bosom of his friends. In Antioch, Ephesus, and several other towns, also, there were Christian congregations anxious to retain him. And to a man of the world, it must appear wonderful that he declined so many offers, distinguished for their liberality. But decline them he did. Relinquishing all the endearments of early affection, and all the comforts of elegant life, he repaired, with motives which his Creator alone could appreciate, to the rich, the gay, the licentious city of Corinth. For what? To exhibit the resources of his ta-

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lents? To gather the laurels of literary fame? To grasp the treasures which thousands had gone there to accumulate? No, none of these. Indifferent to the charms of glory, and the magnificence of wealth, he collected a little flock around him, and taught them the preciousness of redeeming blood. He bent with them before the altars of prayer—he poured the balsam of Heaven into the bleeding heart—he watched the sleepless agonies of death—he wiped the tear from the cheek of bereavement—he pointed the anxious eye of inquiry to the rest that remaineth for the people of God. After toiling for several months with the most affectionate fidelity, he resolved to revisit the scenes of his childhood. He promised, however, to return to the people of his charge; and during his absence, as an encouragement to their piety, he transmitted to them the epistle which closes with the beautiful sentiment of the text: *Finally, brethren, farewell.* I can easily conceive what emotions such a declaration must cost a Christian pastor.

My hearers, he is a libeller on religion, who pronounces it hostile to the social affections. It regulates and sanctifies them. So far from enfeebling the vigor of friendship, it sheds over it the sublime hope of perpetuity in Heaven. And if there was a single trait which more than others distinguished the great apostle of the Gentiles, it was the warmth of his attachments. In advancing the interests of his flock, nothing was too hazardous to be encountered, and nothing too painful to be endured. With the solicitude of a parent, he investigated their wants; he sought out the abodes of poverty and suffering, and sin; he assimilated himself to every grade of weakness and infirmity. I know, indeed, that he made the delegated throne of the Cæsars to tremble; but he could as easily unbend the commanding energies of his mind, and assume the docility of a child.

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When surrounded by genius and philosophy, his illustrious talents illuminate every subject he touches;—when he is seen among the illiterate and poor, he conforms to their views, and encourages universal confidence, by his dignified familiarity. Such was the man,—not the imperious tyrant, not the cold-hearted stoic, but the humane, the feeling, the noble St. Paul, who instructed the Corinthian Church, in the first place, to be perfect.

My brethren, the necessity of holiness in the heart is the corner-stone of Christianity. To whatever external observances we may conform, if this great principle be wanting, the gospel of the grace of God remains a dead letter. Nor is it wonderful that it should be so; for, apart from the forgiveness of injuries, all the external and relative duties of life are inculcated by the codes of Heathen morality. And I appeal to you, Did an incarnate Deity expire in ignominy and torture; did he resign the helm of the universe, and come down, and bleed, and suffer, and die, to teach what Plato, or Socrates, or Aristotle, had taught before him? No. He has, indeed, within these lids enjoined the discharge of all the social relations, but that is only a parenthesis in the volume; it is one of those occasional blessings which religion strews around her path to the upper world. Every man who knows the alphabet of the Bible, knows also that the love of God is uniformly made the criterion of piety; and how this can be cherished without the tribute of positive affection—how we can be attached to our Creator any more than to a friend, while the feelings are entirely disinclined to His character,—are questions which ought to be answered in the solitude of the closet; but destined, as perhaps I am, to meet you no more till the resurrection, I cannot conceal my fears, that much of what passes for piety will be burnt up by the first flash from the fires of the judgment day.

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Be of good comfort. To shield Christianity from the charge of moroseness and gloom, appears to have awakened the apostle's most active solicitude. He was aware that restraints imposed on the propensities of the natural heart are too commonly construed into attempts to abridge the rational pleasures of life. My brethren, if Mr. Addison's distinction be just between cheerfulness and mirth, regarding the one as a habit and the other as an indulgence of the mind, the theory we oppose is chimerical and vain. It is true that the incipient stages of piety are marked by exercises of no very grateful kind. Because in being affected, as affected we must be, by the conviction that we are sinners, our views are naturally clouded with apprehension. But, in the language of sacred Scripture, "the weeping endures for a night, joy cometh in the morning." No matter how severe the pangs of remorse; no matter how unwelcome the impressions of guilt; when a beam of mercy does light upon the heart, it comes, like the rainbow of the deluge, a pledge that the storm has subsided, and a presage of future serenity and peace. To a Christian, then, not only is cheerfulness becoming, but the want of it, except in cases of constitutional infirmity, is a suspicious symptom. For the law of God is only beneficence acting by rule, and he who ascribes to it the most distant design of retrenching the sphere of human happiness, has never yielded that sincere and affectionate obedience which is required.

Be of one mind. Perhaps an expression like this might seem to countenance that unyielding stubbornness, which clings with the grasp of death to the punctilios of its own opinions. But it has no such meaning. In the Greek language, it never refers to the intellect, but exclusively to the affections. My brethren, we are not constructed to agree in every little apex of belief, nor am I certain that on all accounts it would be desirable. Truth, like light, is often

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produced by collision. Men are fond of thinking for themselves; and to this propensity, however it may at times have degenerated into the obstinacy of error, are to be ascribed some of the most majestic results which the human mind has ever accomplished. Forgetful of the unimportant diversities of private judgment, the apostle calls on us to rally around those cardinal doctrines on which our redemption is reared. He exhorts us to unanimity of design, and concentration of movement, in enlightening the ignorance, reforming the vice, and reclaiming the debasement of society. He cries to us to form an impenetrable phalanx against the desolating career of infidelity; against the gilded and seductive corruptions of misnamed liberality in religion; and against the palsying influence of those supine and selfish automatons who never give a dollar to humanity or to God. All this may be done; all this ought to be done; and yet, in every proper sense, we may comply with the apostle's last injunction, to live in peace. Indeed, there is no feasible method of promoting public harmony, except by defending the institutions, and cherishing the spirit of the Gospel. Go where we will, beyond the influence of Christian principle, we shall find community united by no general bond. We shall see the miserable panders of calumny rioting on the security of social confidence, and the pestilential mildew of detraction blighting the paradise of domestic love. But when we trace the footsteps of Jesus Christ, we may be cheered by another scene. Dissension retires at his approach; the heart swells with kindness and philanthropy, and life is lightened of half its toil by the consolations which alleviate its sufferings. As far as in us lies, therefore, let us live peaceably with all men. Let no sectarian prejudice be permitted to invade the territories of personal friendship. Let us distrust the calumniations which are heaped on others, and disregard those which are aimed at ourselves. Let our

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social and private affections be sanctified by the blood of the Cross, and then, and not till then, will the God of peace and of love be with us. How precious the promise! how exalted the hope! Exposed as we are to a series of restless vicissitudes, what can be more delightful than the presence of that Protecting Power who will count our tears and soothe our sorrows? Who of us can recal the scenes through which we have passed, without appreciating the value of piety? When misfortune has shrouded our prospects; when the grave has sounded its summons through the family circle, and snatched its victim from our arms; when we have been stretched on the bed of expected death, and alarmed by the apprehensions of eternity, have we not longed to catch that blessed sound,—Thy sins are forgiven thee! Ah! sweet must be the hope of the Gospel in a dying hour; when the last pulsation is trembling through the heart, the sinking head of the believer is pillowed on the bosom of Jesus, while the spirit, dislodged from its tenement of clay, springs to the realms of everlasting bliss. My hearers, this is the grace of God. Every succeeding day is extending its trophies, and illustrating its glory. And when I see the flowers of Eden again blossoming on earth; when I catch the spires of Christian churches glittering amidst the pagoda and funeral piles of Hindostan; when I find the rude and revengeful savage exchanging the war-whoop of the wilderness for the songs of salvation; when I behold the benignity of the Gospel beginning to beam through the mosques of the Arabian prophet, whose disciples were converted at the point of the bayonet, and baptised in blood; in a word, when I watch the dawnings of twilight breaking through the eastern sky, and shedding their splendor over the dark and dismal expanse of human desolation,—I cannot help thinking that the God of peace and love is once more about to visit our benighted world, and to fill and animate it with all the evi-

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dences of His glory. Yes, my brethren, the aged father, who was once abandoned to the waves on the charge of years and infirmity, is now followed by his children to the tomb; the mother, who once poisoned the nutriment of her bosom, to preserve her little babe from the anticipated troubles of protracted life, now gives that babe to its Saviour; the devoted Hindoo, who once panted to be crushed under the clotted wheels of his idol, is now telling what God has done for his soul. Already have the Missionaries of Christ begun to smother the fires of the widow's pile, to arrest the immolations of Juggernaut, and to redeem the endearing loveliness of woman from the degradation to which every country but Christendom has consigned her. The night is far spent; the day is at hand; Chistianity is awaking from the slumber of centuries, and moving on with accelerated triumph. Genius, and learning, and office, are weaving laurels for her brow, and adding their hosannas to the thundering acclamations which announce her magnificent march. The whole world is in motion. The jubilee of earth is commenced. The dove has gone out of the ark, and brought back the signal that the waters are retiring. On every shore are displayed the banners of the Cross. You may see them waving from the frozen ledges of Greenland to the burning sands of Sierra Leone; from the isles of the Pacific to the banks of the Ganges; from the snows of the poles to the scorching suns of the equator. The Indian is burning his Shaster, the Arab his Koran, and the Hottentot his consecrated relics. The tenant of every soil is cheered by the tidings of pardon, and the complexion of every climate irradiated by the hope of immortality. The Gospel—the everlasting Gospel—the Gospel of the God of peace and of love, is beginning to extend; and it will extend, and extend, and extend, till the ruins of Sin, amidst the blaze of the last conflagration, shall be lost in the splendors of eternal day.

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But from reflections so grand and animating, I must turn to another theme. The period has arrived, when personal obligations, as well as the interests of the infant flock over which I have been called to preside, require that I should leave this city. Never in my life have I cherished a more sincere design than that of returning to the people of my charge; but I know not how it is, and perhaps it is weakness to confess it, but I feel an unaccountable presentiment that I shall never meet you again. O, my God! is this the last time? Will the return of November find this voice stilled in death, and this frame mouldering under the clods of the valley? If it should be so, I can only say, that the kindness and affection I have found here will animate the last prayer of my heart for your happiness. But whatever may become of me, I beseech you go forward with the undertaking in which you have embarked. Discard the incentives of sectarian rivalry, and build a church for yourselves, your children, your city, and your God. Above all, prepare for the judgment-seat of Christ. O, when I cast my eye through the pews where you are now sitting, and remember the awful pestilence which has so lately shrouded this place in mourning, I cannot repress the inquiry, Who of our number, before the summer is closed, will be sleeping in yonder grave-yard? For whom is that funeral knell to be next sounded, which within three days has twice rung its admonitions in our ears? And if I should live to return, which of you shall I find missing from the dear little circle of friendship? Ye saints of the living God, farewell. Keep near the hill of Calvary; and as you cluster in gratitude and devotion around the Cross on which your Saviour expired, forget not to pray for your pastor. Farewell, ye who are seeking an interest in Jesus; do not despond; the darkest hour is nearest to day. It was not till Peter had begun to sink that his Redeemer rescued him. And, O, ye votaries

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of the world, what shall I say to you? The sand is rapidly wasting that measures your existence, and yet must I leave you impenitent! Listen to my parting words: When you hear that I am laid in the dust, remember that I warned you to think of eternity! I have done.

Once more, my dear people, I bid you a long, and God only knows, but a last farewell.

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SERMON IX.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."
2 *Tim.*, iii. 16.

THIS passage has already been partly discussed on the last Sabbath. After enumerating at that time the principal arguments on which the sacred writings grounded their claim to a divine origin, it was proposed that the exercises of the present evening should be devoted to the objections by which that doctrine has been most commonly assailed. Conformably with these arrangements, therefore, we now begin with the considerations supposed to invalidate the authority of the sacred Scriptures, among which one of great celebrity is, that so small a portion of mankind has possessed them. The boon, it is said, has been granted only to one-fifth of the computed population of the earth, while the remainder are enveloped in darkness. This, I confess, is a specious argument. In reply, I forbear to remark, that those nations which are ignorant of Revelation have consigned themselves to ignorance by their own folly and guilt; I only say, that if we adopt the singular method of reasoning down facts by presumptive evidence, we shall prove too much. Suppose the Bible to be a fabrication, I would ask, how a benevolent God can *enlighten and civilize* one part of the world and leave the rest to debasement? Why is one country seen in chains while another is free and happy? Why is idolatry wielding its iron sceptre over so many millions of our race, while we are enjoying—what shall I say, the blessings of the Bible? no—the refined and manly improvements, if you please, of infidelity? How comes all this, if, as we are told by those who are too wise to believe the sa-

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cred Scriptures, there be a God of mercy at the helm of the universe? But perhaps they tell us that the human mind will, ere long, emerge from its degradation and throw off the shackles of ignorance and error. Here, however, we are, at all events, on a level with them, for we can and do retort, that the religion of the Bible is not restricted to a day or an age;—it looks forward to centuries which will yet record its triumphs—to generations which will yet catch and communicate its tidings—and to a world which is soon to be filled with its influence and renovated with its glories.

Besides this, it may be observed, that the only necessity of a Revelation arose from the guilt of mankind. Now, if they have actually fallen from their innocence and extinguished the opportunity of their own return to God, why should they call upon Him to remedy the abuse of one favor by the gift of another? Is it not confessed on all hands, if any thing at all be confessed, that it was unmerited mercy alone which gave us the sacred Scriptures? Surely, then, mercy ought to be at liberty to do what it will with its own. A claim to equality must rest on equal rights; but when none of the claimants pretend to any right, why should one portion complain for being refused a gratuity which is bestowed on others? Just analogize the argument in the works of Providence, and see where it will lead. Why ought not an idiot to complain because his neighbor has the perfect faculties of the mind? Why may not an honest beggar complain because hundreds, who are actually as destitute of honesty and character as he is of wealth, are rolling in plenty? The truth is, there is no stopping this principle when we have once set it in motion. A poor man may complain because others are rich; a stupid man because others are intelligent; a Hindoo, because he was not made a Christian; and a Christian, because he was not made an angel. Deists might object to the Bible on the ground

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of its limited diffusion, and Atheists might oppose the existence of God by pleading the disorder and sin which are visible in His works.

Now, let any man who takes such ground against the sacred Scriptures first begin to explain the difficulties which are every day rising in real life. Let him not be so eager at presumption till he has silenced the language of fact. When he shows the world why the allotments of Providence are unequal, we will tell him in return why the sacred Scriptures are unequally distributed. But who *are* they that feel so much for those who are left destitute of the Bible? Is it the pious, or is it the skeptical? I ask the question, because it would be strange that those who care nothing about their own souls should feel so tender a concern for the souls of others. But whoever they may be, why should they cling so closely to this objection? Do they suppose that all who have not the Bible in their hands must necessarily be lost? Not at all. They invariably disclaim the doctrine; and if they do not, I do. What may be the opinion of others I know not; but for myself, I should be unhappy, or, if I were not, I should deserve to be, in coming to the cold and chilling conclusion that all the Heathen, in every age, will finally perish. It is true that they, no more than ourselves, can *merit* salvation. Their repentance, their sincerity, their sacrifices, have no more intrinsic efficacy than our own would have. But the death of Christ, whether they ever heard of it or not, has rendered it consistent for God to exercise mercy towards all his creatures—the heathen as well as us; and why suppose they may not share it? Do you say that all men are commanded to believe in Christ, on the penalty of perdition? I admit it, in cases where Christ has been known; but God does not require absurdities. No command can be binding where it was never heard of. We might just as well affirm, that

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infants will be lost for not believing in Christ. Do you say, then, that on this reasoning all Heathen will be saved, because we hope for the universal salvation of infants? I reply, Not at all. We have reason to believe that an affecting proportion of the Heathen world will perish, but they will not perish for not believing in Christ if they never heard of him; and as to those who are saved, it will not be because they are too sincere, too ignorant, or too conscientious, to make it just to condemn them, but on the same ground that any of us are saved, because, since the mediation of Christ, God can consistently pardon sin, and therefore it is no more impossible that He should pardon the Heathen than that He should pardon us. In both cases He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. It may be inquired, however, If the Heathen can be saved without literally believing in Christ, what need of sending them the Gospel? This question is best answered by asking another. It was just asserted that the atonement of Christ has made it consistent for God to forgive sin in all His creatures. Every obstacle which before existed is removed. Suppose it were asked, then, what need of a Bible at all? What need of *our* hearing any thing of Christ? Why might He not have come into the world without all the parade of prophecy and types and figures, and be encrucified in some retired corner, where the thing would have been directly forgotten, if the great object would all this time be answered—if the justice of God would have permitted the pardon of our sins then as well as now? It is not necessary to say, my hearers, that if any man expects the pulpit to degrade itself by answering questions like these, he will be much mistaken.

It is another evidence, we are informed, that the sacred Scriptures are not inspired, that they contain contradictions. This objection is very often brought up, and as often

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prostrated. Why does not somebody lay his hand on one plain contradiction, and show it to the world. A single case of this kind would put the question forever to rest; and surely he must have an unfeeling heart who can see such men as Bacon, Paschal, Locke, Newton, and Leibnitz, the dupes of credulity—who can see whole cities, and kingdoms, and continents enlisted in the ranks of Christianity, and marching forward in the light and warmth of a pretended Revelation—who can see all this, and yet not speak one little word to arrest the colossal delusion! But where are these reputed contradictions? We are perhaps directed to the cosmogony of the Pentateuch. Moses says in the outset that God made light, but, as if he were not philosopher enough to know that the sun is the origin of all light, we are told that he does not mention the creation of the sun until the fourth day. Now, my hearers, the first passage has been always deemed proleptical—a general account, afterwards drawn out into details; or, if the objector does not like this explanation, we shall call upon him to prove that the sun must necessarily have been made prior to light. It is granted that the sun is now the fountain of light. But let him show that the fluid of light was not diffused originally like caloric now, and that a collection of it into one body, for obvious purposes, did not make the sun. We do not assert the theory, but we affirm that it would be warranted by the holy text, and that genuine philosophy has not a word to say in opposition to it. Again: it is said that a contradiction appears in the different periods assigned for the continuance of the children of Israel in Egypt. In one place we read of four hundred years, in another of four hundred and thirty. This, it is true, looks inexplicable at first sight, but a little examination disperses the whole difficulty. We learn that the time is computed from different dates—in one passage from the birth of Isaac, and

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in the other, from the period of Abraham's leaving the place of his nativity. In general, however, with regard to numerical difficulties in sacred Scripture, it is surprising they are not more frequent; for when we recollect that, both in Hebrew and in Greek, the letters of the alphabet were employed to represent numbers, we may well wonder that the common and often very close resemblance of one letter to the other has not created greater confusion in the text, because, in the first place, no one pretends that the transcribers were inspired, and besides, with respect to numbers, mistakes might easily occur, because the copier is not assisted, as in other cases, by the scope of the connexion in which they stand.

Again, it is alleged, that the sacred Scriptures contradict not only themselves, but the fitness and propriety of things, by describing God as requiring Abraham to offer his son in sacrifice—as permitting the Israelites to borrow from the Egyptians, and afterwards, secretly, to leave the country—and as sanctioning, and even commanding, the extermination of the people of Canaan. As to the exacted oblation of Isaac by his father, we may ask, where the power of life and death can rest, if not with the Creator? It was a trial of the patriarch's faith, which certainly ought to have been stronger than parental affection; and as soon as he had evinced this, the knife was arrested, and his son released. Is there any thing more strange in this, than that God should call hundreds to attest their faith, not merely by the prospect, but by the actual reality of violent death? Have not the sons of other parents been doomed to destinies still more dreadful? Have they not died, in spite of parental prayers, and parental love; have they not died at the stake, in the dungeon, or, more and worse than all, in the horrors of a guilty and lacerated conscience? With respect to the Israelites borrowing from the Egyptians, we remark,

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that the expression conveys to the mind an idea entirely incorrect. What the word *borrow* might have signified two hundred years ago, when the present translation of the Bible was made, it is difficult to say; but this much is certain, that if the Septuagint, the Hebrew, the Vulgate, Syriac, Chaldee, Persian, Samaritan, and Coptic versions, together with nearly all the old English translations, except our own, are to be regarded, the true word is *demand*, instead of *borrow*. But, suppose God did authorize his people to borrow certain articles, with no intention of returning them. He evidently had a right to do so. But you say the example is injurious. To whom? To the believer? I never heard of one either complaining of the fact, or misled by the precedent. To the Infidel? No, for instead of being *deceived* by the example, he is the very first man to detect its reputed impropriety, and expose it to the world. Respecting the command to exterminate the nations of Canaan, we remark that they had provoked the Divine vengeance, and no one will doubt that God has the right of inflicting punishments at pleasure.

Now, when we reflect that the supreme Being, at that period, spoke to men directly, or, if I may say so, in person, where is the wonder that those whom He thus certified of His will beyond the possibility of mistake, should be employed as instruments to execute it? Let us test the case by a familiar parallel: Suppose a city of South America were to be destroyed by an earthquake. This would evidently be nothing unjust. It would be regarded as a *mysterious*, but, at the same time, as a righteous providence of God. Suppose, again, that instead of this, the Supreme Being should instruct an individual to apply a torch to the public magazines, and blow the city to atoms. We might, perhaps, feel at the first a sensation of horror, but the moment we knew that the man who fired the

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train was infallibly authorized by the Almighty, could we, with the least semblance of reason, complain? Would the dispensation be more cruel, or more unjust, in one case than in the other? There is but one remaining instance of seeming contradiction which we have now leisure to discuss. I mean the different genealogies of our Saviour, recorded in the New Testament. This is capable of conclusive explanation; but if it were not, I should think it an evidence rather for, than against the writers; for, at all events, it would prove that they had no previous understanding—no comparison of notes—because, if so, their genealogies would have tallied with each other. But to return. Matthew gives us one genealogy, and Luke a different. Now, it was through Joseph, his reputed father, that our Lord was accounted in law a member of the ancient royal family. Unless this fact were established, he would not have answered the character of Messiah. Matthew has therefore given us his *legal descent*, according to the public records kept by the Government. On the other hand, as it was necessary that he should have descended naturally as well as legally from David, Luke has given us his lineal genealogy by tracing the progenitors of Mary, his mother. So far, then, from a contradiction in the two statements, they furnish a reciprocal testimony to each other's truth; because they publish to the world a genealogical table, which, if it were false, the Jewish archives were always able, and those who kept them, always eager, to disprove and destroy.

A third objection to the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures is taken from the supposed sufficiency of the light of nature. This is mentioned last, not because it is deemed the least, but because it is commonly made a kind of rallying point, to which cavillers retreat when their ranks are broken in every other direction. And what is the light of

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nature? Is it the character of God displayed in His works? Is it the manifestation of power, wisdom, and goodness, we meet around us? Is it this which is sufficient? I admit it is so; for Beings who have never sinned—but not for *us*—it teaches no pardon for guilt; and whatever else it may be calculated to teach, we have no disposition to learn. So is the light of the natural sun sufficient. It would do no good to make *another* sun. But what kind of sufficiency is this to a blind man? Does he see any better on that account? So are Newton's principia sufficient to make a mathematician. But this is no comfort to a man who cannot read—who knows nothing of numbers—who has not intellect enough to understand the book. Test the theory by fact. What kind of sufficiency does the light of nature bring to the Hindoos, the Hottentots, the New-Hollanders, the savages of our own wilderness, or, still more, to the cannibal Caraibs and Arancanians? I admit that these are extreme cases; they are drawn from nations in which the intellectual powers seem nearly extinguished. But where else ought we to look? What instances more in point than these, does the argument require? For surely, if the light of nature be sufficient at all, it were strange that it should not be sufficient for the children of nature. But take a different set of examples. Go back to the reign of Heathenism, and explore every nook and corner of antiquity for evidence. Select, if we will, the most profound and venerable sages who ever flourished under the dynasty of unaided reason; and what have we gained then? We gain the testimony of Plato, that it is not possible for mortal man, without a Revelation, to discover any thing concerning religious truth. We find Socrates teaching, that men cannot know even for what to pray in a right manner, unless God reveal it to them directly. We hear Alcibiades, Aristotle, and Plutarch, confessing the necessity of a special message

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from Heaven, to clear away the darkness of nature; and Jamblicher declares, in his Life of Pythagoras, that it cannot be known what things are pleasing to God, unless we attain the knowledge of them by some Divine means. But why do I multiply proof? What was the object of the numerous forms of pretended Revelation scattered through all antiquity? What meant the oracles of Apollo, Dodona, and Jupiter Ammon? What was intended by the mysteries of Ceres, Bona Dea, and Eleusis? If they meant any thing, they indicated the necessity of a Revelation, not only for religious purposes, but for the political government of the state, and the welfare of the people at large. This was the wisdom of Heathen philosophy; and when I hear of the boasted sufficiency of the light of nature, I cannot but think that the assertion, whether true or not, is not remarkable for modesty. For nature *alone* can certainly teach us no more than it taught the Heathen sages; and when a caviller, who has all his life had the advantage of Christianity, begins to smuggle truths from the Bible, and to palm them off under the hypocritical label of light of nature, he looks, as somebody has expressed it, like a dwarf mounted on the shoulders of a giant, and boasting that he exceeds the stature of ordinary men. But I will place the argument in another attitude: It may be said that the philosophers just enumerated, although naturally desirous of accession to their knowledge, were yet sufficiently acquainted with the truth. I have no disposition, my hearers, to touch a single laurel which decorates their brows. I admire their talents, respect their virtues, and cherish their memory. But that they were sufficiently acquainted with the truth, I do not believe, for it is not the fact. Look where we will, into the purest of their creeds, whether of fabulous, civil, or philosophical theology, we find some, or all of them, comprising doctrines from which we instinc-

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tively recoil. The greatest men of the age inculcated the most absurd polytheism and idolatry. They invested the heavenly bodies, the spirits of the dead, the affections of the mind, and even the phenomena of nature, with the attributes of Deity. They presented to the people, beings acknowledged as devils, clothed them with divine perfection, and worshipped them accordingly. They believed, that between virtue and vice there was no important difference, except such as might be erected by law. They ascribed the origin of the world to a malicious conflict of evil spirits alone, without the agency or interposition of Omnipotence. Some of them denied the existence of all Providence; others affirmed the inspiration of their own writings. The indulgence of licentiousness was allowed—the sensual appetites left unrestrained—a community of wives sanctioned—the right of suicide enforced—and the revenge of injuries taught and exemplified; and it is worthy of remark, that these idolatrous and polytheistic absurdities seemed to gain instead of losing ground, while the countries in which they were licensed were moving forward to civilization and refinement. In short, to use the words of Puffendorff, "what they called religion was chiefly instituted for the benefit of the state, but did not instruct the people concerning the Being and Will of God, nor how they ought to regulate their practice and actions so as to please God." Can any one look on a picture like this, taken from all the deformity, and all the awfulness of actual life? Can he do this, and seriously tell us that the light of nature is sufficient—that the Bible has not reclaimed the human mind from degradation, and human hope from obscurity and conjecture? If so, let him coolly sit down and calculate the miseries which that Bible has terminated—the ignorance it has instructed—the excesses it has abolished—and the wide and withering moral desolation to which it has said, "Hitherto shalt

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thou cease, but no further." I have no idea of throwing over this subject any rhetorical flourish. It is as it ought to be, a simple question of fact. Where were the persecuted Helotes, periodically massacred in cold blood, to check the increase of slave population? Where were human oblations—often sons or daughters—offered in the public markets, while the parents were forced to preside in the sacrifice? Where were celebrated, in open day, the obscene Lupercalia—the Ludi Florales—the Aphrodisia—the Thesmophoria—and the festivals of Bacchus and Ceres,—scenes which it is almost guilty to recollect? Where was the abominable crime of poederasty* comprised in the allowances and prescriptions of public law? Where were creditors permitted to sell the debtor—and if that were not enough, to put him to death; and if that were not enough, to cut his body in pieces, and divide it before his wife and family? Where were deformed children torn from the mother's embrace, and stifled by an order of the commonwealth? Where were the inhuman gladiatory shows, which reduced murder to system and amusement, and clothed a whole community in perpetual mourning? I mean not that all these crimes were chargeable on the philosophers. Many undoubtedly would have been glad to arrest them; but they could not. The light of nature furnished neither sufficient arguments to urge, nor sufficient motives to exhibit. And now, that the Word of God Almighty has done the work, shall we ascribe our blessings, our intelligence, our hopes, to the light of nature? Hopes, did I say? Show me a single hope of Heathenism, which could ever unclench the nails of a coffin? Point to the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body in Greece or Rome? And, above all, find there a scheme for pardoning

* See Rom. i. 27. See also Leland's Adv. & Necess.; Dick on Inspiration; and Potter's Gr. Antiquities.

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sinners. Hunt among their groves—academies—amphitheatres, for a Saviour's Cross, and a Saviour's blood. Here it is, my brethren, here, where the immortal soul is at stake, that the light of nature is the darkness of Egypt. Not a ray does it shed over the grave—not a glimpse does it open to the disclosures of eternity. And, shall we be told that the sacred Scriptures, which have dispersed this night of gloom and horror, are not inspired, because the light of nature is sufficient? Have we been basking in all their meridian blaze, from our cradles to this hour, only to doubt now, not merely whether they have come from God, but, whether we might not have known, and loved, and glorified Him well enough without them? My hearers, I dismiss these objections for ever. You can appreciate their force. You can say, whether they will stand the test of the day of judgment.

In closing the subject of Inspiration, permit me to present you a single thought: Looking around us in life, we find a variety of opinions in regard to the Bible. Some persons disbelieve it entirely; others have serious doubts respecting it; and a third class reject some of its doctrines, which are essential to salvation. All these men, too, pretend to be, and I have no doubt they commonly are, sincere in their sentiments. They seem as confident in the correctness of their opinions as they could be, if the opinions actually were correct. Now, what is to be done? Here is a portion of society, who say they have examined the subject—who profess themselves open to conviction—but all this time are fostering erroneous views. This is certainly an unfortunate dilemma—but what is the remedy for it? How shall a man help himself, who sincerely and confidently believes error to be truth? Why, my hearers, just as anybody else helps himself, who has, by some unhappy mistake, got in trouble. How shall a man help

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himself, who, through negligence, or perhaps intentionally, has taken laudanum, and fallen into a stupor? I know not —he may, or he may not awake—I cannot tell. Just so of him who believes error to be truth. Perhaps he may one day come right, or, perhaps, he may go to the bar of Christ without it. Who shall say—who shall presume, that after God has given us a Revelation, which he thought supported by sufficient evidence—after he has taught us the doctrines of grace in a manner which he thought sufficiently clear,—who, I say, dares presume, that He will make provisos and exceptions for every man who chooses to believe something else, or nothing at all?

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SERMON X.

"And searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed."

Acts, xvii. 11, 12.

It was the observation of a great Roman philosopher, that the mass of mankind derive their opinions of every sort from mere prejudice. Whether the remark be correct or not, in its entire dimensions, we need not now inquire. Certain it is, for who with his eyes open can doubt, that we often embrace sentiments on trust, and permit them to exercise undisputed dominion over the mind, while at the same time we remain ignorant of the reasoning, if there be any, to which they appeal for support. Against this kind of feeling, and against the positive and persecuting spirit which it always inspires, the apostle Paul was called incessantly to struggle. Look at him where we will, apart from the instance related in the text, and we find his preaching resisted from the outset; and why? Because he was not sheltered by the Bible? Because he ever swerved from that great statute-book, which, and which alone, he ought to have taught? No; none of this. The complaint always took another direction: he neglected the traditions of the elders; or he had some hard sayings who could hear them? or he made the words of truth and soberness ring rather too loudly over the slumbers of conscience. This was his crime: he opposed opinions of long standing, and peculiarly comfortable to impenitence, whether true or false nobody appeared to have asked; he opposed them, and he must be wrong. To this convenient and fashionable logic, I have already said there was one illustrious exception. When the apostle visited Berea, a town

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of Macedonia, he found the citizens disposed to be candid. They felt goaded, indeed, by his doctrines, but they took a manly and dignified course. They did themselves the justice to go and search the sacred Scriptures daily, whether those things were so; and the consequence was, one of the most natural consequences, too, in the world, that many of them believed. Now, the sentiment which the text first discloses, is one which sound philosophy and common sense conspire to confirm; and that is, that in the concerns of religion we ought ever to cherish a spirit of impartial and industrious inquiry for the truth. Indeed, we might go further, and say that a temper of this kind is essential to every investigation in which we embark; but it is peculiarly so on a subject which involves the destinies of eternal being, because *there* a willing ignorance cannot exculpate the mistakes it may harbor, nor does the conviction of error, if it arrive at too late a period, bring with it the certainty of effectual cure. I am aware that to intrust every man with his own conscience, and with his own opinions, has been pronounced the patronage of skepticism. But even in *that* case, it might become a very doubtful problem, whether any thing be gained in forcing a man to receive sentiments by compulsion, which he would renounce from choice; or, in other words, whether he had better be an infidel or a hypocrite,—whether the duplicity of pretending to good principles be a desirable substitute for the candor of confessing he never had any. Be this as it may, the business of religion lies exclusively between conscience and its God. To pretend, therefore, that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation" hath not "appeared unto all men," and that all men have not equally the right of examining the credentials it bears, is a creed to which the world is either too old or too young to subscribe. "Ignorance is" no longer "the mother of devotion;" and how far soever such a maxim may have

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suited the blindness of Pagan idolatry, or the brutality of Moslem fanaticism, or the derelictions of the Christian Church in the dark and dismal ages which gave it currency, we know, or ought to know, better. The Bible has no statute of limitation. It invites perusal—it requires scrutiny—it is going the rounds of the inhabited world, and knocking at every house, and hovel, and heart, for admittance. Singular indeed would it be that Inspiration itself has eulogised the Bereans for searching the sacred Scriptures daily, if they were not permitted to search them. Singular that the apostles, so far from claiming dominion over the faith of their brethren, should exhort them to "try the spirits," and to be thoroughly persuaded in their own minds, and to prove all things, that they might hold fast that which was good, and to be able to give to every one that inquired a ground of the hope that was in them, and to search the sacred Scriptures for the very best reasons to be imagined, because, that in them they thought they had eternal life. And if we go higher still,—if we instance the Lord Jesus himself, in whom alone any consistent claim of infallibility can rest,—how strange does he appear in reasoning with the Jews, by an appeal to their own prophets,—in directing them carefully to consult the sacred volume, to see whether it testified of him,—in stooping to the humblest capacity, to enlighten, and discipline, and instruct it,—in comparing, explaining, and enforcing the evidence of the prophecies and miracles, and in predicating the condemnation of his enemies entirely on their voluntary ignorance, or their unreasonable opposition. How strange is all this, if the Bible be not the master to which every individual must stand or fall? I have no wish to erect a formal hostility to any ecclesiastical restrictions of the use of the Bible,—nor, on the other hand, am I conscious of any particular apprehensions from speaking as I think. But I

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do believe, that if any thing on earth be common property, it is the sacred Scriptures; and not only so, but to withhold from the meanest intellect its rightful access to them, is to exercise despotism over the mind; and, although it may extenuate the guilt of sin in one quarter, it gives it redoubled aggravation in another. But, after all, this is saying but little. The text not only establishes the right, but enforces the duty, of reading the Bible. This, and this alone, is the volume which discloses our relations to the Almighty. The light of nature may do much,—"The Heavens may declare the glory of God, and the firmament show His handiwork," —but nothing short of a Revelation can depict Him in the attitude of dispensing the pardon of sin. Victims have bled—altars have smoked—the annals of every country have been crimsoned with the records of propitiatory death, —but all to no purpose. It is Inspiration alone which can safely say to the trembling suppliant, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." By how much, therefore, we are sinners, by just so much does the Bible become invested with an interest solemn and lasting as eternity. It comprises all the certainties of a future state—all the consistencies and adjustments of the Divine government—all the conditions on which sin may be pardoned, and all the hopes which such a pardon is calculated to inspire.

Now, my hearers, I do not wish to pry into the corners and crevices of every man's life,—but I fear all of us might confess that our attention to the sacred Scriptures has been most deplorably disproportionate to the magnitude of the subjects on which they treat. If there be a book with which the mass of men are less acquainted than with any other of similar extent of circulation, it is not difficult to say what it is. Hundreds who have attained the age of manhood, and the dignity, besides, of the paternal relations, have not a Bible in their houses, or, if they have, it lies in

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some secluded corner, aloof from inspection, and entirely uninterested in the practical concerns of life. And if this were really owing to the want of time, the case might admit of palliation. But an apology so far fetched, carries on the very face of it the evidence of its own insincerity. For the newspapers we always husband sufficient leisure. The state of exchange, or the character of the market, or the prices current, are subjects which never fail to find us at some hour in the day disengaged; or, if indifferent to them, a new play, or a new novel, will sometimes rivet us down, as if our reputation were suspended on reading them; and, even after we *have* read them, or whether we ever read any thing, a large proportion of our employments are resorted to for the purpose of killing time, while it seldom occurs to us that we are immortal, or that we owe any duties directly to God.

I am speaking on this subject, my hearers, not so much in reference to the guilt we inevitably contract, by disregarding the messages of Inspiration, as to the unhappy, though too natural, consequences of it in practical life. This, more than all besides, is the reason that infidelity finds so welcome a shelter in the mind; for, to disbelieve what we know nothing about, and especially if it would impose a restraint on our indulgences to believe it, is one of the easiest tasks in the world. Hence it is, that the most obstinate and exasperated skepticism has commonly been engrafted on the most benighted ignorance. Men have not been wanting who would fix the charge of imposture on the Bible with a positiveness bold as demonstration; and yet, come to push the inquiry, they never read six pages of the volume. They reason in a circle from assumed premises, to a conclusion which they are compelled to use in turn, to prove the premises; and half of them cannot tell whether he obnoxious Saviour lived in the reign of Julius Cæsar or

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of Constantine the Great. Who does not know that the original of this picture is found in almost every community in Christendom? Even those who adopt their ordinary opinions with caution and care, seem to think perfectly at random in religious things. Instead of argument, they furnish themselves with the convenient terms of enthusiasm, credulity, or common people, and especially if a fine sally of wit can be indulged at the expense of Revelation, the whole thing is reduced to the certainty of Euclid. With men of this description, it is but justice, I will not say to the Scriptures, nor to their own souls, but to common discernment and good sense, that they should examine opinions more carefully which they are so forward to condemn, and, at all events, while they are too indolent to investigate the *evidence*, they would suffer nothing by aspiring to a little more modesty in rendering their verdict.

There is another respect in which an acquaintance with the Bible *is* absolutely necessary; and that is, to understand its doctrines. On a subject so important as religion, all men feel, as they ought to feel, entitled to their own opinions. They know that what a minister of the Gospel may say is not true, because he says it, but because it is supported by "Thus saith the Lord;" and the only reason that his sentiments are entitled to unusual weight is, that, if diligent, he has examined them with unusual care, and, if sincere, has felt their practical influence on his own heart. Now, there are men accustomed very seldom to look within the lids of the Bible, who come to church once in a while, perhaps once a week, as prompt, as they could be after the most laborious research, to admit or deny the doctrines to which they listen; and what is remarkable, a few of these, such as human depravity, regeneration, and eternal punishment, have a doom almost exclusively unfortunate. They are rejected on the threshold; they are consigned to thought.

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less oblivion, without even the ceremony of asking the opinion of the sacred Scriptures on the subject. To such a course of conduct, every thing like reflection enters a solemn protest. The fact is, if doctrines of that kind be true, they ought to be believed; and if they be not, it is the Bible alone which has a right to disclaim them. There never was, and never will be, a sentiment uttered from the pulpit, which any man with the everlasting Gospel in his hand may not legitimately arraign; but to leave the sacred volume untouched and unexamined, and set to impeaching truths merely because we dislike them, is as if we should condemn the medicines administered in sickness, because they might not suit the relish of appetite. In this way, not only is the minister charged with bigotry—a charge, however, much more unjust than it is alarming—but the admonitions of that God who cannot lie are denied, or despised, or forgotten, at the very moment that they are rolling forward to all the certainty, and all the awfulness of their accomplishment. But the final and most powerful inducement for searching the sacred Scriptures is drawn from the result mentioned in the text—that many of them believed. It is a maxim as correct as it is common, that to be sensible of an error is half the work of reformation. I do not say, that to read the Bible is any part of repentance; but one thing may be safely affirmed, that it is an indispensable preliminary to every step we take in religion. It is impossible that we should comply with the terms of salvation while we remain ignorant of them, and comply we *must*, or we shall never be saved. Either God Almighty must give us another, and a very different revelation, or those who choose darkness rather than light must go away into everlasting punishment. Indeed, the whole index of those exercises through which a sinner passes in the process of conversion, is found in the Bible. It is there he detects the character of the na-

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tural heart; there that his pulse begins to quicken with apprehension; there that he learns to kneel in the dust, and cry for mercy; there that he discovers his own helplessness, and leaves himself behind him, and grasps the Cross of his Saviour, and drinks in the precious consolations of pardon. The Bible alone dries up the tear from his cheek, and points him to the sinner's friend, who demands from the broken heart no recommendation but wretchedness, and no condition but the acceptance of relief. All this may sound, my hearers, like the language of mystery, and indeed it is so, unless interpreted by the Bible. I do not wonder that every thing connected with experimental religion is mysterious, to him who examines it only from the cold regions of philosophy and speculation. The hidden things of God are contained alone in the volume of God. Nothing but "His law is perfect, converting the soul;" nothing but "His testimony is sure, making wise the simple." We might as well descant on colors while blind, or study mathematics without figures, as attempt to understand our relations to the Godhead without an intimate acquaintance with the Bible. Where is a Christian who will not acknowledge it to have been a guide to his feet, and a lamp to his path? who has not drawn from it the rules of his conduct, the nourishment of his piety, the support of his trials, and the encouragement of his hopes? And if this evidence be insufficient, where is the secure and slumbering sinner who has not neglected his Bible just in proportion as he has found himself hardened in impenitence? Can it be, that the profane oath, or the violation of the Sabbath, or the insanity of the gaming-table, are indulged after a serious perusal of the word of God? Rather, can it be, my hearers, that any of us can sleep on in our sins over the brink of eternity, and feel ourselves so little at home in our closets, and forget so easily our most lively impressions, and our most salutary fears?

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Can this be, if we permitted the Bible every day to warn us of our danger, and to disclose the approaching retributions of the invisible world? These are questions which appeal to our consciences for an answer. Sooner or later an answer must be given, and ours is the gain, if it be not postponed to too late a period. The time is coming, when all of us may be anxious to understand the meaning of that volume which reveals to a sinner his only hope. If we can make up our minds to believe that to-day alone is the day of salvation, we must begin with the Bible. If we are willing to run the risk of deferring the subject to a dying hour, let us at least inform ourselves of the true state of the case; for in that tremendous moment we shall need all we can now know, to furnish the feeblest probability of conversion, under circumstances so desperate.

May God add his blessing. Amen.

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SERMON XI.

"And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures."
2 *Tim.* iii. 16.

The young man to whom this Epistle is addressed, was the bosom friend of the apostle Paul. The attachment which commenced between them early in their ministerial career was invigorated afterwards by a variety of circumstances. They were fellow-travellers in their mission—once, at least, they were imprisoned together—when possible, they were associated in official labors—and during the intervals of temporary separation, they had maintained an affectionate correspondence. Hence it is, that St. Paul so frequently mentions him in his writings. He alludes in several instances, to the kindness and assiduity of his friendship—the generosity of his character—the eminence of his Christian attainments; and more than once does he speak of him under the endearing appellation of *Brother*. Indeed, few persons seem to have surpassed this young disciple in the engaging and dignified consistency of his demeanor; especially his religious deportment, was correct beyond ordinary precedent. He appears to have been thoughtful from childhood—and that too in a situation by no means the most favorable—for his father was a professed infidel. His education, however, was superintended by his mother and grandmother, both of whom were pious, and therefore solicitous to mould his principles by the sacred volume. They led him early in life to the fountain of inspired truth. They delineated to his opening mind the relations which he sustained towards God. They carried him in the arms of prayer to the mercy-seat; and the result was, that his first

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views received a virtuous bias. As he advanced in years, a reflecting and serious disposition gave him respectability; and in the end he became prepared by personal religion, for the commanding attitude he afterwards assumed in the Church of Christ.

Now, I do not affirm, my hearers, that a similar system of education is in every instance rewarded with the same success; but I do say, and it is very much the doctrine of the text, that a virtuous direction of mind, a useful and respectable standing in the world, and not unfrequently a radical renovation of heart, are results on which we may legitimately calculate when we impart to children in season a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

I say, we may expect a virtuous bias to be given the mind. The morality of the Bible, especially in regard to children, stands decidedly unrivalled in the ethical world. Let it take them before the affections are debased, or the habits corrupted, and it will exert an influence through the whole moral system. At all events, it will pre-occupy the ground and impose a set of salutary restraints; growing with their growth, and strengthening with their strength; from which few will afterwards be able entirely to escape. Nor is this all: not only will it neutralise in a great degree the temptations of vice, but it will be constantly enlarging its own dominion, and securing its own efficacy and power. It will arrest those angry, selfish, and frequently immortal propensities, which, on the one hand, the whole intercourse with the world is calculated to inspire, and a necessary immaturity of judgment on the other cannot be supposed successfully to resist. By diffusing the light of Revelation, it will disperse that midnight of moral ignorance, of which vice invariably takes advantage to steal from its concealment in the heart, and triumph in the publicity of its depredations. But on a point like this, I need not enlarge.

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It is enforced too powerfully by experience to need proof; for there is, perhaps, no man accustomed to watch the operations of his own mind, but must have felt that his character, whether good or bad, was decided very much by the impressions and views of his youth; and surely, if such be the fact, what single feature of life can be conceived of greater importance than that which is instamped by religious instruction, and perpetuated through subsequent years by all our strongest, because our earliest associations?

I have said, that an acquaintance in childhood with the Holy Scriptures is often the basis of respectability and usefulness in the world. Society imposes certain restraints on all its members; it demands an interchange of kindness, decorum, and good faith. It says to the ardor and impetuosity of the human passions, "Hitherto shall ye come, but no further." Now, to prepare the rising generation for these observances—observances, without which the whole mechanism of life would be incurably disordered,—to do this, there is nothing so important as to give them the Bible. It forms their principles as well as curbs their excesses; and seldom is a child beyond the danger of crime, except when the penalties of human law are sanctioned and enforced by an enlightened conscience. Look into our prisons, and trace to an incipient cause the brutality and insubordination which they confine. Does not the disclosure apprise us in a vast majority of cases, either that no religious views had been formed in youth, or, if they were, that they had been effaced by a violent and unnatural effort of wickedness? On the other hand, when we enter any well-regulated community, we easily discover where it bestows its confidence and where it dispenses its favors. It is to the judicious—the sober—the reflecting: it is to men, on whom, because they have fixed and correct principles, there can be a safe de-

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pendence. Sometimes, indeed, genius, or family, or fortune may overleap this rule; but such instances so seldom occur, that they are exceptions rather than examples. Respectability in the world is commonly based on those moral feelings and habits which the Bible inculcates; and in ninety-nine cases of one hundred, experience would testify that these have been moulded in early life, and entrusted with a powerful influence over the destinies succeeding manhood and age. But there is another result still more important, which a timely instruction of children in the sacred Scriptures may secure. I do not mean the impulse which it communicates to philanthropy. I do not refer to the projects which it has incipiently devised for relieving indigence, and suffering, and want. I do not point you to Howard, and Reynolds, and McIntosh, whom it sent on their errands of missionary mercy. It has an aim higher even than that. It aspires to the ultimate triumph of leading the heart to personal and practical piety. Such appears to have been its animating and glorious result in the case of Timothy, to which our text refers. The exertions of maternal kindness were rewarded—the prayers of an affectionate mother and grandmother were heard; and the plant which they reared with so much assiduity and tenderness, rose at last into a mighty tree, beneath whose shade the Church of Christ for half a century found repose, refreshment, and strength. It is not said, for it is not meant, that a saving knowledge of religion is a necessary consequence of a pious education; but certain we are, that this is one of the most powerful auxiliaries which human solicitude can consult. If there be, as there undoubtedly is, a striking analogy between the kingdoms of Providence and Grace, who can safely assert that a suitable perseverance in the appointed means is unsuccessful in the one case more frequently than in the other? But, at any rate, to those who

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have the Bible in their hands, there can be no Christian hope, except on the conditions which it has delineated. By imbuing the minds of children, therefore, with religious truth, we place them, if I may say so, upon the theatre of Divine grace; we give them the Scriptures to shelter them from the temptations of the world; and, above all, we multiply the rational probabilities, that they will, one day, be bathed in the blood of a Saviour, and prepared for the kingdom of their Father and their God.

Such, my hearers, are some of the leading considerations suggested by the text. You are aware how closely they apply to the subject which I am appointed, on the present occasion, to propose to the patronage of this community. Indeed, the design of the Sunday School Society, for which your assistance is now solicited, has been kept in view during all the remarks you have just heard; and I know not, that it could better be expressed in a single sentence, than by saying, in allusion to the text, that it is to give to men from their childhood a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Since the first formation of Sunday Schools, they have had but one great object, and that has been to devote a portion of the Sabbath to the instruction of children in the elementary and acknowledged principles of the Bible. They keep aloof from all creeds—all sectarian distinctions—all controverted topics; and aiming simply at the good of society, and the welfare of souls, they wish, like the Saviour of the world, to take little children in their arms, and to bless them for this life, and that which is to come. The first of these institutions originated in the benevolence of a citizen of Gloucester, in England. His name was *Robert Raikes*. In 1782, his attention was arrested by the idleness and vice exhibited among the children of that city on the Sabbath. Prompted by a princely heart, he hired four female teachers, in different streets, to instruct these rep-

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mature vagabonds on the morning of the Lord's Day. During the following year, his plan had pronounced so well its own practical eulogy, that the public papers took up the subject, and laid it before the most intelligent men of the kingdom. So rapidly did it secure the confidence of community—of statesmen, politicians, and the clergy of every Church—that a General Society, established in London in 1785, was computed the following year to have under its inspection, in the different counties, not less than two hundred and fifty thousand children, regularly instructed in the sacred Scriptures on the Sabbath. This parent institution, headed by a distinguished member of Parliament, and comprising the talents, enterprise, and wealth, of the most conspicuous gentlemen in Great Britain, moved forward with an activity equalled alone by the kindness which impelled its efforts. Not satisfied with founding schools in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, it crossed the Channel, and cheered and animated the Continent with the asylums of its Sabbatical philanthropy.

The same spirit has traversed the Atlantic, and visited our own country with its inspiration. Under the culture of female benevolence, Sunday Schools were commenced in New-York in 1815, and although the United States cannot claim the merit of originality in design, they have not been surpassed in promptness and harmony of execution. From Boston to New-Orleans, and in hundreds of interior towns, the subject has enlisted the most vigorous support from all sects of Christians, and all classes of men, and at this moment, not four years from the first conception of the project, an estimated number of one hundred thousand children, instructed by ten thousand male and female teachers, are evincing to the world the efficiency of American exertion. But why do I speak of American—why of states or kingdoms, on a theme like this? Why

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do I assign locality to an institution which claims all Christians for its supporters and all Christendom for its home. Rather let me say, that wherever the Gospel has been preached, there have Sunday Schools been erected. In Europe and America, in Asia, that metropolis of idolatry, in Africa, the empire of degradation, from Canada to New-Holland, from Ceylon to the West Indies, from Nova Scotia to the Cape of Good Hope, they have multiplied their trophies. This very day, my brethren, they have led more than one million children to the great dispensary of eternal truth, and one hundred thousand teachers to distribute the gratuitous bounty. God has planted, and reared, and blessed them. They have reclaimed the Sabbath; they have purified society; they have depopulated prisons and poor-houses; they have crowded the Church of Christ; and it is not enthusiastic to believe that they will be hailed by thousands through eternity as the instruments of their final salvation. But were they to accomplish none of these results, they will for ever retain one laurel which I had rather wear than all the stars, and crowns, and mitres, which ambition ever coveted or subjection bestowed. They originated that stupendous moral machinery which is renovating the world;—I mean the British and Foreign Bible Society. This institution, it is well known, was first conceived by the Rev. Joseph Hughes, a Baptist clergyman. Previous to his forming the design, however, a number of Sunday Schools had been established in Wales, and, owing to a scarcity of Bibles, a Welshman, by the name of Charles, repaired to London to obtain a supply. It was while there, and in conversation with that gentleman on the subject, that Mr. Hughes framed the magnificent project of a society, which, like the sun, has visited all parts of the earth with its life and light, and warmth, and animation.

But, appealing, as we now do, to the liberality of the pub-

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lic for assistance, it may be inquired what objects we hope to attain by this institution. I answer, in the first place, that it sheds an aspect of stillness and serenity over the Sabbath. Its efficacy in this respect is literally astonishing. I remember the observation of a distinguished physician in New-York, whose profession led him to see much of that place, that such was the change produced by Sunday Schools, he could easily have distrusted the evidence of his senses. On this point, however, I can safely appeal for testimony to those of the audience who have recently resided in the Atlantic cities; and if the foreign gazettes may be credited, the same order and tranquillity are witnessed in the principal towns of Great Britain. Just in proportion also to the observance of the Sabbath, does this institution become a powerful engine for the prevention of vice. During the week, children are induced to husband their leisure moments for their lessons; and when Sunday arrives, they repair to the place of recitation, to receive the reward of their industry. This is at once relieving the parent from a duty which he seldom has time to discharge; and it also shields them from the examples of idle, heedless, or profane servants, and the company of improper associates—exposures which have probably debased and degraded more youthful minds than all other causes united. I only add, that of four thousand children educated on this plan by Mr. Raikes, in Gloucester, but one at the time of his death had been charged with a crime, although the whole of them had then attained the age of maturity. After all, the importance of Sunday Schools may be estimated chiefly by the blessings they convey to the pupils themselves. They develope the faculties of the mind, and especially they elicit and exercise the powers of the memory. With respect to poor children, also, who have few other advantages, they frequently detect, amidst the rubbish of ignorance and obscu-

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rity, the diamond of native talent. Besides this, they have an unequivocal tendency to create habits of respectability and virtue. Often, very often, have they rescued purity from exposure, misfortune from despondency, and innocence from temptation. Conversing recently with an intelligent merchant at the eastward, he told me with much feeling, that he could never cancel the debt he owed to Sunday Schools. On subsequent inquiry, I was informed that they had reclaimed him from early debasement and laid the foundation of his present affluence and character. A similar instance lately occurred in New-York: A young man called at the British Consul's office, and made himself known as the pupil, several years ago, of a Sunday School in the north of Ireland. He was the child of shame, and no parents owned him for their son. But that Sunday School had been to him a father, and mother, and sister, and brother. With the principles which it instilled into his mind he had entered the world—become his own ancestor, and secured, by merit, a standing which family had not bestowed. He handed to the Consul one hundred dollars, his little earnings in a foreign land, and wished it remitted to his destitute mother—the forlorn daughter of sorrow, and guilt, and disgrace. But there is another triumph which has distinguished the march of Sunday Schools, and that is, the frequent instances in which they have led the docility of childhood to the Cross of Christ.

Could I present you, my hearers, with a register of those who are indebted to such institutions for the hope of immortality, I should think my object secured. In cases too numerous to be related, have children been ultimately imbued with the spirit of that Bible which they studied at first only under the incitement of curiosity or emulation. Multitudes are now living, of the most consistent Christian character, who ascribe to this origin their first religious impressions;

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and, as if to demonstrate the genuineness and divinity of the work, hundreds have been called to the world of spirits, and left their dying testimony to the power of the Gospel on their hearts. I might easily fill up the evening with examples. I might tell you of a child eleven years old, in Baltimore, not long since removed from life, who spent the last efforts of nature in singing an hymn she had learned at the Sunday School. I might remind you of a pupil of nine years, in Massachusetts, who called his parents to his bedside, told them of the love of Christ, kissed them a composed farewell, and died in their arms. I might repeat the story of a little child in Edinburgh, eight years only of age, who had found his Saviour in a Sunday School; who remained firm in the hour of dissolution; summoned the family around him; gave one hand to his father, and the other to his mother, and triumphantly expired. I might recite an impressive variety of cases in which juvenile faith has abandoned the pursuits of sin, enlisted in the ranks of religion, honored the Church and the world, disarmed death of its terrors, and irradiated eternity with the hopes of the Gospel. But I will not consume your time by recounting the items of this evidence. Rather let me add: Here are the objects of our ambition; here are the conquests we aspire to achieve; here are Sunday Schools in all the legitimacy of their influence, and all the majesty and magnificence of their results. Of the institution in this city, we can only say, it has risen, like the rest, from small beginnings. Receiving continual accessions, however, about seventy pupils are now the regular subjects of gratuitous instruction on the Sabbath. Upon you, my hearers, it depends whether we shall go on in the work we have begun. Lend us your patronage, and we will cheerfully submit to the labor, the toil, the difficulty of the undertaking. Replenish our funds, and send us your children, and we will rear in New-Orleans an institution of

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civil, social, and religious good, which all of you shall rejoice to contemplate. I have no further arguments to urge. This is one of those subjects which, to the citizen, the philanthropist, the Christian, plead their own cause, and speak their own eulogy. Let me merely say, that if your liberality enables us to accomplish the plan we have commenced, not only the children who are now advancing to take our places as we retire from life, not only they, but generations yet unborn will rise up and call you blessed.

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SERMON XII.

"We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."
2 *Corinthians*, v., 20.

THAT was not an unmeaning inquiry of the prophet, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Were an angel suddenly to light upon this earth, a stranger to its impenitence and guilt, and degradation, he would instinctively recoil. He would find himself on a little isthmus, between time and eternity, wasted by the one and washed by the other; and yet crowded with millions of immortal souls, indifferent to the suddenness and certainty with which they were sinking into the surrounding abyss. He would see them absorbed in a world they must soon relinquish,—unmindful of an existence they will never terminate,—and careless of a Saviour they must receive or die; and, overpowered by the solemn and affecting prospect, he would exclaim, in the words of Inspiration, "Verily, the carnal mind is enmity against God—not subject to the law of God—neither, indeed, can be."

But, my hearers, it needs not the purity nor the penetration of an angel to adopt this melancholy language. It is only to examine the lineaments of the natural heart by the light of the Bible, and all of us must confess that we are the enemies of God, unless and until "reconciled by the blood of His Son." For what else is the meaning of the text? On whom could the apostle enjoin reconciliation but on enemies? How could he instruct us, as instruct us he certainly does, to return to friendship and peace, if we had never before felt hostility? The truth is, he has deceived us—and every chapter of Revelation has deceived

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us,—and, may I not add, our own experience deceives us, unless we have, by nature, an evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God, and unwilling that He should reign over us.

But, my hearers, long as we have revolted from our allegiance, the unlimited offer of pardon is still published. Still does the angelic Hallelujah swell through the Heavens, "Peace on earth, and good will to men." Still is it announced from the lips of Inspiration, that God is, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing to them their trespasses. This is the message which the apostle proclaims to-day, in the words of the text; and, as if to impart to his expression redoubled solemnity and importance, he prays us, *in Christ's stead.* He would have us regard the Lord Jesus himself, as applying to each of our hearts the impressive entreaty, "Be ye reconciled to God." Each of us, did I say? No, I trust there are some who have already complied with the command, and are, therefore, exempted from this renewed solicitation. But where *are* they?

Is it we, my brethren, who are the professed disciples of Jesus? who have taken the vows of God upon our souls, and sealed our covenant at the sacramental table? Alas! I fear some of us have given little other evidence of our attachment to Christ. We have, perhaps, had a religion of vows, and sacraments, and professions, while the things of the Kingdom have been dispatched rather as matters of convenience and security, and our light before the world has appeared the dim and flickering flame which has only made our darkness visible. It may be the unregenerate, who know, as we ought to know, that the effrontery of the pretension does not establish the genuineness of the claim,—that they have often had a right to say of us, "What do they more than others?" And, my brethren, if, on impartial trial of these facts, the verdict of conscience be against

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us, we ought, instead of hunting through past life for the evidence of present piety—we, of all others, ought to lie down in the dust, and apply the apostle's injunction, "Be ye also reconciled to God."

I am aware, my hearers, that it is hard and humiliating to fix upon ourselves the charge of hostility to our Maker. Even were I to leave the visible Church, and go into the world, it would be quite as difficult to find those who would appropriate the accusation. Pass, if it were possible, from man to man, through the assembled ranks of the impenitent, and they would unanimously exclaim, "God forbid that we should be His enemies. Never could we be guilty of ingratitude so base towards the Preserver of our lives, and the Giver of our mercies. It is true, we have committed many sins, but it was done with no bad design, and so far from harboring hostility towards God, we have always thought of Him with reverence and love."

Now, my hearers, if all of us can so easily escape from the application of the text, what did the apostle mean in saying what he has said? He did not write this epistle for Botany Bay, or Bridewell. He did not send it to a band of robbers, assassins, or outlaws; and if he had done so, they might reply, like the rest of the world, that they had never cherished a direct hatred against God. But the apostle wrote to a Christian congregation,—to a body of men, accustomed, as we are, to assemble for Divine worship, and to yield that respect and decorum which it requires. It was to them, and, by a parity of reasoning, it is to us, that he addresses the exhortation of the text. As the herald of Jesus Christ, he beseeches us "to be reconciled to God." All things else are ready; the ransom is paid,—the proclamation is published,—the blood of Calvary has extinguished the fires of justice,—and God Himself is entirely reconciled to *all sinners*, but impenitent sinners. To them, therefore,

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the apostle now speaks,—no matter whether to the openly profane or to the hypocritical pretender, or to the self-righteous formalist, or to the deceived and deluded professor of religion,—on him who is unregenerate, whoever he may be, this passage nails the declaration of Nathan to David, "THOU ART THE MAN!"

But, is it possible, my hearers, that to be unregenerate is to be at enmity with God? This is surely an important point to establish; for, in the first place, the Apostle takes it for granted, in the text,—and, besides, till we can ascertain some existing hostility, we shall never listen to the proposal of reconciliation. Let us, then, decide the question, by a plain and serious examination of ourselves at the bar of conscience. None of us can be ignorant that we are instructed to love the Lord our God with all our hearts. And, let me ask, have we done this? Has He been the object of our most warm and affectionate thoughts? Rather, have we not lived days and weeks without even the ceremony of recollecting that He had preserved us? And, perhaps, if some casualty *has* reminded us of Him, we have felt a sensation of uneasiness until the melancholy visitation had subsided. How long have we ever lived without prayer? and when we *have* occasionally consented to the hardship of bending before the altar, has it not been with a cold and heartless formality, accompanied by a kind of pleasing emotion when the task was over? And is this love to God? Is this the active and animating exercise which we dignify with the name of affection in our intercourse with each other? Again,—one of the most decided marks of Christian character is made to consist in attachment to the disciples of Christ. The reason is obvious;—we cannot love the original without loving also the image. Is it not so, then, that we are disaffected with the spirituality of the divine law, and disposed to persuade ourselves that it does not

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require the strictness and self-denial which we sometimes see exemplified? Do we not secretly disrelish the features of holiness which appear on the unfashionable people of God? Do not our faces almost unconsciously brighten when we see a professed Christian conforming to the customs of the world? And do we not experience a feeling of sensible vexation, in proportion as he grows in heavenly-mindedness and grace? And can it be that we really love God, when we are either indifferent, or opposed to His people, and the more so, by how much the more they are assimilated to His sinless character? Again,—we are taught in the sacred volume, that if we love God, we shall keep His commandments.

Now, my hearers, let us abide a moment by this standard, and inquire whether there be not restraints imposed by the divine law which we actually disrelish,—whether we do not labor to remain ignorant of them,—and when conscience is really at a stand, unable to direct, whether we do not always lean to the side of our own indulgence,—whether there are not duties enjoined which we deliberately neglect, and sins forbidden which we solemnly know we have not abandoned,—and even in those things which, in themselves, have been good? Let us bring *them* to the test. Why have we been kind and generous, and honorable? Has the love of God been our motive? Have we maintained this character because He requires it? or only because we have naturally a lofty and benevolent disposition, or because it is something which the world admires, or because we hope to reap some praise or profit from it, or because we expect it passed to our credit in the great day of accounts?

Why, too, do we visit the sanctuary? Is it with the pious salutation of David, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh crieth out for

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the living God"? Or is it to get rid of the Sabbath; or to criticise the performances; or to see our neighbors and friends; or to pay a tribute to the institutions of society; or to remunerate our consciences for the sins of the week? And when the customary signal is given for prostrating ourselves before the Throne of Mercy, are not our eyes roving through the building, as if we had no interest in the service, and our hearts everywhere else but towards Heaven, in the attitude of prayer for the blessings we need, and of penitence for the guilt we have contracted; or if the prospect of death, or the apprehensions of punishment, sometimes alarm our stupor into earnestness, is it not because we feel that we are going, and think our own beloved selves in danger, and tremble over the anticipated retributions of eternity? And call we this love to God? No, my hearers, it would be solemn mockery. A hope like this must perish. That convenient religion which knows no warmth of affection, and no duty of self-denial, which is satisfied with the homage that custom forbids it to withhold, but never thinks of taking the Cross and following Christ in the regeneration,—the whole is but a set of empty compliments to the Almighty. If we have nothing but this to present, my hearers, the question is settled. We need hesitate no longer. With nothing but this, we shall retain the carnal mind, and Inspiration itself has hazarded the assertion, that the carnal mind is enmity against God. What, then, is to be done? It has come to this: that we are buried in spiritual sleep; we are dead in trespasses and sins; we are bound and blinded in hostility to the Divine character, and yonder approaches the apostle with a treaty of reconciliation. Where is, then, the hope of pardon? Can we change our own hearts? No, my hearers, it is not exacted. We are not required to reconcile ourselves to God, but to *be* reconciled. Had it been left to our own exertions, not a single

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sinner would ever have seen Heaven. As soon may the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as the human heart subdue its own corruption.

But, again, it is asked, What, then, can be done? We reiterate the answer, Nothing at all by the sinner. And are there none of us who are glad to hear this declaration? who are secretly exulting that we can do nothing, and making it an apology for going on undisturbed? Alas! so far from an apology, it is but a fresh evidence that we are by nature the enemies of God; for in what other case should we settle down so composedly in the conviction of our own impotence? Were we floating on the brink of some dreadful cataract, with our limbs lashed to the boat, and incapable of action, should we be satisfied because we could not escape, or should we shriek for assistance? Were we stretched on the bed of disease, palsied and motionless, while our dwellings were on fire around us, should we soothe ourselves in our own imbecility, or should we cry for rescue from the roaring conflagration? Why, then, shall we stand every hour on the edge of the eternal world without a single prayer for mercy? Why shall we remain secure, and then seek an excuse for our indifference in that very depravity which ought to stop it on our lips? Why shall we—how dare we, live along unconcerned, and plead our inability with so much composure, as if we should by-and-by bring the Almighty to terms, and He would save us in spite of ourselves? I know we can do nothing, and that is the very reason that we are called upon to awake and bestir ourselves; for we must *feel*, too, that we can do nothing, or nothing ever will be done for us; and this we cannot feel till we have made the experiment, and ascertained our entire helplessness. When we have learned to despair in ourselves, we shall be willing to confide in Christ; when we have thoroughly made the attempt to work out our own sal-

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vation, then, and not till then, shall we find, that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Never shall we be reconciled to Him, unless we approach Him through the Mediator, and on the footing of that act of grace which is published in the Gospel. Every thing like self-righteousness must be abandoned; our repentance, our prayers, our tears, weigh not a feather in the scale of merit. The sufferings of Christ alone must be regarded as the ground of our acceptance, and his atonement as the only medium of reconciliation to sinners. Nor is this all: we must be sensible of our enmity to God by nature, before we can feel the importance of having it subdued. It needs no credulity to arrive at these impressions. The solitary thought, that we have lived twenty, thirty, or forty years, without one throb of love to our Maker, if we have lived without holiness, will abundantly attest our views of His character; or we can take the Bible, and retire into our own hearts; and if this do not satisfy us that God has not been the object of our supreme affections, we are either too spiritual to deserve the charge, or too stubborn to confess it. There is one more article in the treaty of reconciliation with God; and that is, we must enlist our whole souls without reserve into His service. I say without reserve. He is willing to receive sinners, but they must leave their sins behind them. Every unhallowed propensity must be restrained; every unholy indulgence must be surrendered. In a Christian's heart there is no compromise with the world. The Bible alone is the charter of his hopes, and the rule of his conduct. What that enjoins he loves to execute, however laborious; what that forbids he is willing to abandon, recommended as it may be by wealth, or interest, or fashion. He regards himself as not his own, but as bought with a price; and measuring every hour the rapid step which hastens him to eternity, his life becomes a practical commen-

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tary on the prayer of the psalmist, "So teach me to number my days as to apply my heart unto wisdom."

Such, my hearers, are the terms on which God is willing to be reconciled to sinners. It is with these overtures that we must close; and that, too, in just the manner and form delineated by the Bible, or we are exiled from Heaven for ever. And not this only, brethren, but the time is short. What we do at all, we must do quickly. Long enough have we made light of Christ; long enough have we stood and challenged the storm that is ready to break over our heads. If we are ever saved, there must come, sooner or later, that unutterably solemn hour, when we shall submit to an unconditional surrender. While we are sqandering away the offers of pardon, the sword of justice is perhaps leaping from its scabbard. There is a mercy to the government of God, as well as to us; and I know not but this very moment the decree is issuing in Heaven, "Thou mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

Again, therefore, my hearers, we beseech you, "in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." What is wanting but the heart? "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Were it left to ourselves to determine, what more could we ask Him to do in His vineyard, that He has not done in it? Must another Gospel be published? Must another Jesus ascend the Cross? Must another "My God, my God," burst from the lips of an expiring Saviour? Why, then, shall we stake our immortal souls for nothing, and postpone, and postpone, till the mandate goes forth, "Cut them down, why cumber they the ground?" Had we a guarantee of life, there might be some excuse for procrastination, but we have not. Every day is reminding us how soon it may be irretrievably too late. We are playing a game, while out of Christ, which in a single moment may beggar us forever.

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On every side yawns the unglutted grave: everywhere some new corpse or coffin meets the eye: and, little as we now think of it, we too must go. We know not what a day may bring forth. To-morrow the harvest may be past; the summer ended, and we not saved. "O, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" O, that I had a voice that could reach and renovate the natural heart, and persuade it to be reconciled to God! I would depict the Cross of Calvary, and the agonies of Jesus, and the bar of the Judgment Day. I would compel it to come in. Yes, *I would;* but God alone can do it, and in His hands I leave the decision.

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SERMON XIII.

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom."
Jeremiah, ix., 23.

The history of the Church, to one who will take the trouble of turning it over, presents a most interesting subject of reflection. Time was, when no man ventured to wear the guise of Christianity, without carrying all its warm and thoroughgoing spirit along with it; when the thirsty axe, the crimsoned scaffold, and the dripping cross, offered to the mind such an appalling dissuasive from professing the name of Christ, that nothing short of a renovated heart would embark in the transaction. But now the tables are turned. Now, almost every man, according to his conscience, is more or less a nominal Christian, and the visibility of religion is as common as the spirit of it is rare. I say, *the spirit of it;* for certain it is, that in the matter of that earnest, active, absorbing principle, which made the primitive saints look on every thing in the impressive light of eternity, we find the great mass of mankind, now-a-days, most conspicuously lacking. True, indeed, they do not withhold the tribute of their respect, nor an occasional loan of their time or influence in pushing forward the march of Christianity; but all the while, as for any personal experimental exercises, they know nothing. They have no heart for getting down upon their knees in the single attitude of sinners crying for mercy. An alarming majority move along in the career of impenitence, unmelted and unimpressed, and taking just as wide a swing in the pleasures of the world, as if it brought upon them no corresponding condemnation of being the enemies of God. Now, at all this, in the gene-

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ral, we need not be surprised. We need not wonder that a large portion of mankind should put away from them the spirituality of religion, and content themselves with the very flimsiest profession. The drunkard will put it away from him, because it bids him forsake his cups; and the voluptuary will do so, because it restricts the indulgencies of the table; and the gamester will do so, because it debars him the fascinations of play; and the profligate will do the same thing, because it prohibits the round of his midnight debaucheries; and so we might go out into a hundred individualities of application. You can easily see that all these men will shun the urgencies of personal Christianity, and yet all of them may find it very convenient, both for character and for conscience' sake, to keep up something like the show of an external pretension. But there is another class of persons, about whom the explanation is by no means so easy. They are those who seem to be embraced by the language of our text, men of accomplished and cultivated minds, who, as the prophet has it, "glory in their wisdom;" who go the whole length of assent to the great doctrines of the New Testament, and yet contrive to keep every thing like evangelical religion entirely away from their hearts. I say this is not so easily explained, although for every form of impenitence, seen no matter where, and garnished with no matter how many visible accomplishments, we find an account on the pages of the Bible. We find that the nature which all of us inherit, is impaired and corrupted, and that none of the aberrations into which we may run from the line of duty are to be wondered at, if the grace of God do not keep throwing in a counteractive influence upon our course. But all this, however true it may be, is talking only in general terms.

Upon the subject which our text brings before us to-day, there are many *particular* views to be taken; and therefore

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it is, that we shall set about finding the reasons why persons of reading and taste are disposed to receive Christianity in the main, and yet turn away from all the strict and experimental features which belong to it. I apprehend we cannot better start upon this inquiry, than by beginning with *the force of education*. Among those, indeed, who have been brought up without *any* religion, it is quite plain that we need not look for a feeling of cordiality towards the mortifying demands of the Gospel; but confining myself to such of you as have been piously educated, I think there may be drawn from the nature of the case some explanation of your repugnance to experimental Christianity. Urged upon you at an age when all the gaiety of youthful impulse led you in an opposite direction, you grew up with a distaste for it proportioned to the zeal with which it was enforced. You felt it to be a restraint upon your indulgencies. You looked upon it in the light of a most uninviting, not to say repulsive, damper of your pleasures. You believed, from the mere habit of hearing, and you maintained, from the mere habit of believing; until at last, when you came to form your own opinions, you found yourselves unarmed with a single argument on the side of strict evangelical godliness. Here it was, that the mind underwent the process of a complete revulsion. You looked abroad, and saw that Christianity was divine. You admired the splendid and majestic renovation which she shed over society, but the spirituality of the thing you were unable to understand. You began first to halt, then to doubt, then to be perplexed, and finally to settle down into an immoveable indifference; while, the whole time, you were governed by mere early associations re-acting on the mind, without going for an hour into the work of a personal and thorough investigation. I appeal to yourselves, if this be not the actual arithmetic of your religious history? Has not the custom of

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believing doctrines without argument in youth, thrown over you an almost involuntary presumption, that there is no such thing as an important doctrine supported by argument at all? Have not the prejudices of education taken a counteractive effect, and created as much antipathy on the one hand, as they formerly did reverence and credit on the other? And while I am about it, allow me to say, that much as we may look back and smile over the lessons of childhood, as the dotings of parental fondness, the day is coming, when the prayers and tears of our godly parents will recur to us, and bring along with them a bitterness just in proportion to our present feelings of neglect.

But to return. *Go a step further*. You will find, I suspect, that an additional repugnance to strict Christianity has been insensibly insinuated into your minds by the peculiarities of Christian professors. There is, I know not what disposition in the world, to take up every eccentricity and imperfection which may linger around a pious man, and charge the whole at once to his religion. Instead of inquiring what his religion has done for him, how many impurities it has wiped away, and how many high and lofty sentiments it has inspired, the question commonly is, whether it has left any thing undone, any thing like a relic of those foibles unsubdued, which before had complete and undisputed possession of him. Now, my hearers, on this point, let us go into a computation of absolute matters of fact. Make out a catalogue of those repulsive features which piety has presented to our view upon the different walks of life. Put down upon the list a set of preachers, gifted with none of the charms of eloquence, laying aside in their discourses every elegance of diction, and every suavity of manner, and urging in their most discouraging form the doctrines of an unbending orthodoxy. Put down upon this list the phraseologies in vogue among Christians, but out of date in the common in-

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tercourse of the world—the odd expressions of theological writers, heard, perhaps, from childhood, and disgusting the mind so entirely, that when the ideas themselves recur, even in another garb, the same lurking disgust is sure to be awakened. Put down on this list the demeanor which certain Christians exhibit, the precision of their movements, the solemn manner of doing little things, the audible impulses of the breath, the characteristic tones of the voice, their peculiar positions or gestures in religious worship, and, in short, the whole of that dove-tailed nicety which some men will carry about with them in life. I say, put all these considerations together, and however poor may be the compliment to your better judgment, I doubt much if they have not had their influence in producing your disrelish to spiritual godliness. And look at it, my hearers. On any other subject your fastidiousness disappears. The manners, the style, the peculiarities of men, you never permit to sway your opinions of their sentiments. Some of the greatest personages that ever lived have been the most uncouth and eccentric. Bacon was stigmatised as a juggler; Des Cartes was lampooned as a fanatic; Johnson called Milton a Babylonian, and half the world have called Johnson something worse; and yet the whole of this has never made us doubt a single truth they uttered, or impeach a single profession they made.

But *go a step further*. Your repugnance to experimental Christianity has been increased, I apprehend, by finding it frequently connected with weak and uncultivated minds. It would be a libel on your good sense, my hearers, to suspect you of unfriendliness to vital religion, from seeing it often professed by the hypocritical and wicked pretender. Like every thing else valuable, it has its counterfeits; and you know, as every body knows, that with such a class of men, except as they seek under its venerable name a shelter for

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their sins, it has nothing to do. But it has much to do with men of feeble intellect. With them it does really and vitally connect itself, and looking upon it in this association, I fear you have given to it the character of something beneath your notice. But think over this subject again. Philosophy, indeed, had her alcoves, her lyceum, her academies, and every thing that flung around her the magnificent and imposing drapery of a costly decoration. But recollect that the *poor* had no portion there. Recollect that it is the Gospel alone which is preached to the poor; which walks into every family, however humble, and every heart, however disconsolate, and every mind, however weak, and offers to each and to all alike the blessed news of a provided immortality. And would you undervalue religion, for the very reason that you ought to lend her your loudest applause? Would you despise the sun, which rides through those heavens, because it lightens the meanest beggar on his way, as well as the monarch in marshalling the armies of an empire? Where, tell me, is the mind too lofty to be filled with the sublime announcements of the Gospel? You have seen that there is none too low; when, I ask, shall we find one too high? O, brethren, you might travel over the illimitable dominions of the Godhead; you might converse with those mighty spirits which bend and burn around His Throne, and not one could you meet, who would think beneath his notice that stupendous scheme of mercy which aims to renovate the human heart.

But I need not resort to angels. Walk abroad upon the theatre of mere human excellence. Tell me if you have ever heard of the deep researches of Locke; the powerful reasonings of Owen; the impassioned and unrivalled eloquence of Whitfield, or the exploring intrepidity of Buchanan? Tell me if you have heard of Newton, in science; of Hale, on the Bench; of Boerhave, in medicine; of Milton, in

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poetry; of Thornton, in commerce; of Zuingle, Gustavus, and Gardner, in the field: and then answer, whether that strict and evangelical religion which you have seen controlling the weakest minds, is not fitted also to control the most brilliant, and mighty, and commanding?

But *go a step further*, and we will stop together. I much mistake the matter if your repugnance to experimental Christianity has not been insensibly rivetted by an acquaintance with what is called polite literature—of the ancient classics, the effect, if there be any, in a moral view, is decidedly hostile to the spirit of the New Testament. The captivating imagery of Homer—the indecencies of Ovid—the licentiousness of Horace—and the illusive fictions of Virgil, have come down to us habited in so rich a livery, that we are in some sort heathenised almost before we are aware of it. I am not saying, that we ought to exile authors of such a cast into irrecoverable banishment from our reading; but this I say, that when they *are* read, it should be with a mind warned at all points against their fascinations, and keeping up a broad line of distinction between the virtue of Pagan philosophy, and the piety of Christian devotedness to God. But, after all, it is *modern* literature which operates the most seductively to create a distaste for spiritual religion. Who does not know, that among the publications issuing every day from the press, there is next to none which bespeaks a Christian parentage? Sometimes, it is true, they bring Christianity upon their pages for the purpose of display, and they throw around it the embellishment of all its grand, and all its majestic attributes; but there the curtain falls. To look for that great animating principle which reaches and penetrates the heart, and sends the repenting sinner to the solemn aspirations of the closet—to look for this in almost any of our works of taste,—would be like

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searching the deserts of Arabia for a spot of verdure. I do not mean that all our literary productions, or even many of them, come forth to the world attired in the panoply of a positive opposition to the Gospels. But what then? Neither do they lend the least aid, unless an occasional compliment be called aid, in its defence. In nearly every one of their delineations they are utterly defective; not only wrong in the coloring, but wrong in the groundwork. They make the *good man* every thing but a Christian, and happiness every thing but experimental piety, and human life every thing but the vestibule of eternal existence, requiring of us the business of an active and constant preparation. I have said that they carried with them no direct hostility to religion; but there are some, upon which even this praise of neutrality cannot be conferred; and sure I am, to mention no more cases, that if the moral taste of the community is not wofully corrupted, it will not be the fault of two of the most eminent *poets* of the age, who have inflicted, the one by the impiety of his conceptions, and the other by the licentiousness of his verse, the deepest wound in their power upon spiritual Christianity. Perhaps such men may hope, by throwing over a part of their "melodies" the plausibility of a Christian name, to atone for the depravity of the rest; but for myself, I say, and I say no more, that if God had given me such talents as they have, and if He had seen me like them, perverting the splendid endowment from one end of life to the other, I should tremble to hear the terrific summons thundering through the silence of my grave on the judgment day—"*Arise, and give an account of thy stewardship.*"

I will not, my hearers, impose a further tax upon your patience. You will see that I have made it the drift of my remarks, to obviate some of the most plausible objections commonly set up against that strict and spiritual Christi-

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anity, which I deem it my weekly duty to enforce. I have told you in the language of the prophet, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom;" and now I should like to ask, what is wisdom when applied to the attainments of the human mind? Go and look one moment upon the wonder-working God; wielding the vast enginery of His designs; analysing the effect of each alone, and of all together, and applying them at once to the ten thousand wants, dependencies, and connexions of the universe. Go and see Him pouring the comprehensions of His Omniscient Eye through the limitless ages of eternity, and setting in motion, at the same instant, all the complicated instrumentalities necessary to fill and animate His mighty dominions with the evidences of His glory! Do this, and you will sink down mortified and abashed from your own ideal elevation, and exclaim, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?" Now, it is just this spirit of heartfelt humility which will fit us for receiving in its true character the transforming influence of the Gospel. The plain matter of fact is, that all of us are sinners; and though one may excel another in the extent of literary research, or the lustre of visible accomplishments,—though the repulsive name of enthusiasm may be given to truth, or the stigma of weakness be fixed upon piety—all this time, the irrevocable declarations of the Bible are moving forward to their unassuaged and unimpeded catastrophe. About your mere belief, or your external conformities, I have no question to ask. You may credit Christianity, and tender it the homage of your respect, and uphold it as a salutary institution of society. But this is not coming to the point. To be an advocate is one thing, and to be a disciple is entirely another thing. This will never carry you to Heaven. I wish to know how the great business of *the heart* is getting along, and whether the Saviour has done

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any thing *for you* in the work of your personal preparations for the bar of God? My Bible teaches me that he who is not for Christ is against him; and when I hear such men as St. Paul and his associates talking about the difficulty of salvation—when I look on the fervor of the primitive disciples—when I see the earnest and prayerful anxieties which swell a Christian's bosom, in every age—I cannot help thinking, that something of the same spirit must be ours, if we are ever hailed by the ascended Redeemer among the future worshippers of his glory. Why, then, my brethren, stand we here all the day idle? If there be any thing to be done, do it quickly. The sand that measures our flight to the eternal world is rapidly wasting, and the shadows of the grave are deepening over our path as we pass along. Come and enter your names in the career of immortality. Come and put on the armor of experimental religion, and enlist under the banners of Jesus Christ. Come to him. Leave every pride of intellect, and every impulse of self-confidence behind you, and find in his blood and beneath his Cross, that all-renovating principle which can make you wise unto salvation. Amen.

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SERMON XIV.

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

James, ii., 10.

All of us who read the Bible, are aware that it divides mankind into two great classes,—the righteous and the wicked. Between these it allows no amalgamation. Every individual who loveth God, be his standing or be his attainments never so mean, falls on the one side; and every individual, graced with no matter how many accomplishments, who loveth not God, falls on the other side of the line of separation. This, I know, is a principle which the men of this world are apt to disrelish. They are informed, that in the sight of God there are but two kinds of character. How strange, how mysterious, when, in their own sight, every day, they find one hundred kinds of character, from the very worst to the very best,—from the lowest débasement up to the most high and honorable elevation. The assassin, say they, is regarded with horror,—and the debauchee is treated with coldness,—and the victim of imprudence is looked upon with pity; and then, again, the man of integrity and good feeling commands respect. Surely these different persons are not all on a level. But when we come to open the Bible, we discover but one grand distinction applied to the whole of this vast variety of character,—and that is, the single distinction between the righteous and the wicked.

Now, my hearers, as we have a text to-day which brings us upon the subject, it is proper, in the outset, to inquire how far the Bible teaches, and how far it does not, the doc-

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trine which I have just said is charged upon it by the world. The truth is, it establishes the most delicate and inviolable distinction between the different grades of character. It never has thrown, and never will throw, honor and virtue upon a level with meanness and vice. But one thing it has done,—it has made love to God an indispensable prerequisite to a seat in the kingdom of God. It does not put the gentleman on a par with the vagabond, nor an honest man on a par with a knave; but it says to every one of them, separately, You must be a Christian. In a word, it pronounces us all sinners, and calls on us to make Jesus Christ our friend. And till we have done this, no matter what else we may do, it attaches to each of us, the poor man and the rich man, the man of honor and the man of meanness, a great moral defect, which can be remedied only by one and the same application.

In the words of the text, there is something at first sight extremely mysterious. They seem to imply, that a man, by committing one crime, must of course incur the guilt and the punishment of all other crimes. To avoid this difficulty, some, by altering a letter in the Greek, have made the passage to read, "Whosoever shall offend in one point is *undoubtedly* guilty." This opinion might be satisfactory, were it not grounded on a deviation from the original, which every body confesses no Greek MSS. will justify. Others have supposed that a man, by committing *one sin*, is in fact guilty of *all*, because he opposes the authority by which all are forbidden. But this, instead of removing, increases the embarrassment,—for no man can justly be condemned for one crime when he has committed another, merely because he violates the law which prohibits both. Such a principle would extinguish the very idea of law. For myself, I think the meaning of the passage to be this: The Jews had a favorite opinion, that if their virtues ex-

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ceeded their vices—if they kept more of the commandments than they broke—they would be saved. Against their pernicious theology the apostle James has levelled the whole of this epistle. He informs them that they *could not* keep part of the commandments, and break the rest, for the only true way to keep any, was from a desire to please God; and if they had that desire at all, it would make them as anxious to keep *all* the commandments as any one of them. He tells them that their conduct was not acceptable, from its mechanical accommodation to the Bible, but from the motive which led to it,—love to God, and a paramount solicitude for His glory. Then comes the text, "Whosoever shall offend in one point, he is guilty of all;" or, in other words, if a man will consent, deliberately, to commit one known sin, it does not prove that he has committed any other particular sin; but it proves, that whatever his actions may have been, his motives have not been holy, because his heart has not felt the love of God. A man cannot love God, who is willing, with his eyes open, to violate the least of His laws, or bring the least dishonor on His attributes. This is the doctrine we have now before us. And here it is that we come back to the remark made a moment ago: that the men of the world complain of the Bible, because it sweeps them all, without regard to the opinions of society, under the general class of the wicked.

But if we examine the case with candor, my hearers, we shall find the Bible entirely just in this classification. I can conceive of a man upright and honest, and honorable, and at the same time without one particle of religious principle belonging to him. And what judgment, you will ask, is to be pronounced upon him? Why, undoubtedly, I give him credit for all his virtues, and the world gives him credit, and we pay him the tribute of our love and our respect; and the Bible certainly does not charge upon him sins

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which he never committed. On the contrary, it merely presses home to him the single question, whether, with all his virtues, and all his accomplishments, he is not ignorant of that love to God which the Bible has required of him?

Who, my hearers, *is* this man of honor and integrity, so little deserving the name of wicked? One, I answer, who redeems his word, and does no injury to his fellow, and maintains an unsullied reputation. But all this time, the least feeling of piety need not appertain to him. He may be an occasional swearer, or he may revenge an insult with murder, or he may now and then indulge in a moderate debauch. At all events, he may or may not believe the Bible, or believe in a God. Still, he is a man of honor, and the world calls it unjust that the Bible should place him so far on a level with the knave, as to say equally to both of them, "You must be a Christian before you enter the kingdom of Heaven." I admit, if a man adhere to the rules of integrity and honor, for the sake of pleasing his God, the case would be different; but the only evidence I can have of this is, that he should do every thing in his whole life for the sake of pleasing God. He must leave off his swearing, and his proud spirit must become like his Saviour's, and he must be a man of prayer and of holiness. Then it is that he gives evidence of a heart anxious, above all things, to perform the will of the Most High when and wherever it is made clear to him. But so long as he lives in the commission of any one known sin, he proves, beyond a doubt, that he does not hate sin, because God hateth it. He may be upright and generous, and just; but, though he should keep the whole law, and yet habitually offend in one point, he proves that his virtues have resulted from something very different from love to God, and, therefore, that in the sight of God they are regarded accordingly. His correct and honorable course of life has been dictated by the opinions

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of the world, and the opinions of the world will reward him for it. He will command the esteem and the affection of his fellows; but the religious character of the man is an entirely different concern, to be settled not by appealing to the judgment of the world upon him, but by clearing his heart of every feeling offensive to God, and humbling it into an unreserved and complete subjection to the Bible. But the question will probably arise, If all this rigor be enforced, what is to become of Christians themselves? Do not they commit sin every day,—and are not the best of us liable to be hurried into conduct which the spirit of Inspiration condemns?

Even so, my hearers, it is all true, and yet by no means inconsistent with the principles I have just advanced. To be hurried into sin by the force of a sudden and violent temptation, is one thing, and to fall short in some parts of our duty, from weakness or infirmity, is another thing. But to do an action deliberately which we know beforehand to be sinful, and to be forbidden by the Word of God, is a thing very different from either of them. It is the most positive evidence which can be given, that the heart is radically unholy. No matter what may be its pretensions to Christian virtue in other respects, there is no vital Christianity in it while it consents coolly to violate the least law of God, knowing, at the time, that it is displeasing to Him, and opposed to the purity of His character. I may be carried, by a sudden provocation, away from my self-command, so as to commit imprudence; while I do it, my mind loses the power of reflection,—and afterwards, if I am a Christian, my immediate and deep repentance will show that the act was not deliberate. Again: I may be a Christian, and yet come short of some of my duty to God, by reason of constitutional infirmity, or of the embarrassments and perplexities which surround me.

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But when I deliberately consent to any thing which I am satisfied will be displeasing to God, I renounce all right to the name of Christian, and become at once an outlaw from the commonwealth of Israel, to which no allegiance is sincere without a complete and unreserved submission of the whole heart to Jesus Christ. And here we may get at the meaning of the apostle John, who says, "He that is born of God doth not commit sin." The fact is, he does commit sin. The apostle himself did, and deplored it. But he is speaking of deliberate, known sin. To commit such sin is essentially impossible for a Christian. Show me a man who would purposely lift a finger, if he thought it contrary to the will of God, and I will show you a man who is not a Christian, and who never will be till he learns to obey his God at all hazards, though a thousand worlds were offered to flatter, or a thousand deaths to frighten him from it. Now take this rule of judgment, and go back again to what is called the man of honor and integrity. Suppose him morally correct in every thing but one, and let that one thing be, if you please, that he is occasionally profane. Let him keep the whole law externally, and only offend in this one point. Here, then, is an individual that I respect and love. His reputation in society is unblemished, and his feelings are those of a gentleman, and his deportment is dignified and proper. Perhaps all this time he never opened the Bible in his life; but suppose he has, and suppose I ask him what is the real motive which dictates his honorable conduct? If he say that it arises from his regard to the opinions of the world, I reply, that the world will reward him; it will give him its applause, and its blessings, and I for one will cheerfully lend my share of influence in doing so. I only maintain that the man has no right to expect a reward from his God for what he has done merely in deference to the world. But, suppose he an-

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swer, that he has been governed by a desire to please and to obey God. I offer to him the single question, why, with any real desire of that kind, he can indulge in profaneness, when the Bible has aimed its most solemn prohibition against it—if he sincerely wish to please God, why does he not abandon every sin, and become a man of prayer and of piety? Why is it, that the subject of personal religion is so foreign from all his habits of thinking, and so tiresome in conversation, and so unpleasant when it is urged home on his conscience? Is a man like this, because he is honorable and upright, to be called a Christian? Then, the Bible has grievously erred in telling us that the only division will be, on the day of accounts, between him that loveth God, and him that loveth Him not. After all, however, there may seem to be a difficulty still remaining, more powerful than any which have been named. The Bible employs but two expressions to denote the retributions of eternity—those two are, Heaven and Hell. That Heaven should be the abode of Christians is not to be wondered at. But we are taught that all but Christians are punished in Hell. This doctrine, you will say, is putting all the unregenerate, the best and the worst of them, on a level. The man of integrity fares no better than the dishonest man, and the moral no better than the immoral. All of them, if destitute of this thing called religion, must be alike condemned to Hell. My hearers, if you will read the Bible, you will find that it recognises in the plainest manner the degrees of future punishment. It tells us that men are to be judged according to the deeds done in the body—and that some will be beaten with few, and others with many stripes; and that every individual will receive the reward of his conduct, according precisely to what it has been. I know that, in reply to this, it is said, What is the use of degrees in punishment, so long as the punishment itself is to be eternal?

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Great use, my hearers. The punishment of a future world consists in the remorse and reproaches of a lacerated conscience; and two persons may both be punished eternally, while yet their punishment will be very different. For example: Suppose one of them had spent a life of rapine and blood; think you his conscience will inflict on him no keener suffering than his, who has been an honest man, will on him? Or, suppose one had been educated by pious parents, and brought up in the arms of prayer and of instruction: will the review of his hardened and obstinate impenitence in eternity give him no greater anguish than if he had been but *little* enlightened? The question answers itself. Every man is punished according to his desert; and for every one sin which we have committed, and no more, and for every one duty we have neglected, and no more,—each of us, through an endless hereafter, will suffer a proportionate reproach and agony of conscience in that world where hope never comes. I say each of us—I am wrong. The Lord Jesus Christ has offered to extend pardon to all who put their trust in him. To his mercy the honorable man must come, as well as the dishonorable man. Both of them have sinned—the one undoubtedly more than the other—but still both have sinned; and both, whatever their sins have been, must repent of them; and if they do not repent here, while it is called to-day—while a pardon is offered—the God of Heaven has decreed, that they shall repent in the illimitable ages of a lost eternity. If I place my confidence in Christ, he will wash me in his blood, and shield me from harm. If not, my being an honorable and correct man may mitigate, and my being dishonorable and immoral, may increase my future punishment; but the one, no more than the other, can send my never-dying spirit to Heaven.

Now, upon the whole view of our subject, my hearers,

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what I want is, that every man should take the principle avowed by the text, into his own heart, and apply it to himself. In consoling ourselves, by saying that our lives are, on the whole, moral, or that we have but few prevailing foibles of character, we perhaps forget that all this may be very true, and yet not in the least connected with the great question of Salvation. The point for us to settle is, whether from real love to God we have abandoned every one of our known sins, and made an entire and voluntary surrender of our whole hearts to Jesus Christ? If a man have a habit of profaneness, or a habit of intemperance, or a habit of licentiousness, or a habit of neglecting his Bible and his closet, he must put them all far, and forever away from him, before he can be a Christian; and it is no sort of comfort to him as to the prospect of Heaven, that he has never so many virtues—for it is required of him, that every sin be relinquished; and if he were rigidly to keep the whole law, and yet habitually offend in one point, he is guilty of all that is necessary to shut him out from the habitation of the blessed. It may be a galling reflection, that by retaining a single unholy indulgence, we are to forego the hope of eternal life; but galling or not, it is true,—and it becomes us to lay it to heart with the deepest solemnity, and the most prayerful anxiety. If, indeed, we are living in any one habit of sin, the apostle's observation reaches us in all its emphasis, that we are spiritually dead while we live. Jesus Christ takes the whole of our hearts, or he takes nothing of them; and on us it depends, whether we can give them entirely up to him, and be saved—or, whether we will run the risk of offending in some one favorite point, and being lost for ever?

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SERMON XV.

"Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy."
Luke, ii., 10.

With the connexion, my hearers, to which this passage belongs, none of us, it is believed, can be unacquainted. It announces that most interesting event which was celebrated yesterday, as it is once in every year, by a very large proportion of the Christian world. We are informed, that on the night of our Saviour's nativity, a messenger was sent from Heaven to proclaim—what? why, that Jesus Christ was born. But, then, this single fact, irrespective of the results to which it afterwards led, was not so unusually joyful. Certainly not. It was another, and a far higher consideration. It was because the long-expected Messiah had come; because a Redeemer had appeared for sinners; because glory could then be ascribed to God in the highest, at one and the same moment that peace was published on our apostate earth, and good will to men. These were the reflections which animated the celestial herald, when he broke forth into the triumphant language of the text. But after all, my hearers, why so lively an exhibition of joy at the mere birth of Jesus Christ? Not, surely, because he brought along with him the ensigns of greatness, and splendor, and pomp, for he was indigent and obscure: not because he came to enforce the great principles of morality and virtue, —for this was nothing new, Jewish zeal and Pagan philosophy had done all this before: not, finally, because he was to confirm his religion by the surrender of his life,—for hundreds of others, from that period down to the present, the disciples of Latialis, of Thor, and of Juggernaut, have

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steeped their respective altars in their own blood. Where, then, is the peculiar, the distinctive object, accomplished by the coming of Christ, which deserves so warm an expression of joy as our text has conveyed? It is to this single inquiry that I wish now to be confined. I might name a thousand results which Christianity has brought about. I might say that it has abolished idolatry, and arrested human sacrifice, and alleviated the cruelties of war, and rescued the female character from contempt, and reared the first public institutions of benevolence, and wrought, in short, upon every department of life, the process of a salutary and lasting reformation. All this I might safely assert; but I will waive it for the present, and simply ask, what results the introduction of Christianity has accomplished, which are entirely distinct from the results of any other religion, and peculiar to themselves? What has our Saviour, whose birth we commemorate, what has he ever said or done, which nobody had ever said or done before? This question may be answered in very few words. He has, 1st, by making an atonement for sin, opened a safe path for all of us to return to God. He has, 2dly, offered to help us along in it, by imparting the influences of his spirit to renovate our hearts. He has, *finally*, in becoming mediator between God and man, between the judge and the culprit, insured to all who trust implicitly in his merits, the reward of an everlasting salvation.

In the first place, then, Christianity alone proposes an adequate atonement for sin. Say what we will, my hearers, when degenerate man approaches his Maker for pardon, it must be through the medium of atonement. In every country, and every age, this has been, and it has been felt to be, the only method of reconciliation with God. We find it in the theology of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. We find it in the former worship of Europe and America; and to the pre-

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sent hour we find it through the largest part of Asia, Africa, and the Islands. A great deal, I am aware, has been said in modern times to brow-beat the idea of atonement. All of us have heard the light of nature cried up as a sufficient guide in our religious affairs. But what light, I would ask, can nature give; what has it *ever* given to a sinner, on the question of his hopes for eternity? It may teach him to repent; but this will not answer his object; for if repentance can cancel the sins which he *has* committed, a little more of it will cancel the sins which he may hereafter commit, which would be releasing him from all obligation to God whatever. It may also teach him to reform. But this, again, will not answer his object; for if reformation will ensure him forgiveness, he may put it off as long as he pleases, so he begins it at last; and besides that, begin it when he may, so far from cancelling his former guilt, he is merely discharging his duty, without undoing a single thing which he had done before. This is the light which nature furnishes, and it furnishes no more. It shows the sinner his helplessness, but it leaves him just as helpless as ever. It shows him all the danger, and all the violence of the disease, but it offers no remedy. Do not, if you wish to know the real amount of all this light of nature, do not inquire of those who have been basking for years in the sunshine of Revelation. Go, rather, through the universal history of the world before Christianity appeared; or go now to any known country whatever, which Christianity has not visited, and how much of it shall we find in such a survey? Where was the light of nature when the statute-books of all civilized antiquity were legalising human immolation? Where was it amidst the ferocious and bloody rites of Freyer and Woden in the middle ages? And where is it now on the banks of the Niger, or the plains of Ceylon, or the fields of Hindostan, or the cheerless wastes of India beyond the

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Ganges? When you or I, my hearers, are lying upon our death-beds, something else than all this must come forward to comfort us; and that something else must be the atonement of Jesus Christ, which lends confidence to the prayer of wretchedness, and hope to the tears of penitence. The all-sufficient Saviour of the New Testament must approach, and tell us that God can now be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth. Nothing besides can satisfy the anxieties, and relieve the forebodings of the sinner. Nothing besides can send home to his laboring conscience the assurance of pardon. In entering upon the last hour of life, we shall find the eternity beyond it completely unprovided, unless Christ be in us the hope of glory; and when our never-dying spirits take their flight to the invisible world, it will be all our joy, and all our consolation, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins.

But, again: I have said that Christianity alone provides for the regeneration of the human heart. It affords the Spirit of God to give a new bias to all its propensities, and a change to all its affections. I speak, my hearers, as much the language of experience as the language of Inspiration, when I tell you that we are all gone out of the way; that there is none who doeth good, no, not one; that the carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to His law, neither indeed can be. By this I do not mean that all men are as bad as it is possible, nor that there is little or no difference between the different classes of the unregenerate. But I mean, that we have naturally no holiness, and that, left to themselves, our hearts secretly disrelish holy things; and that the virtues, and duties, and accomplishments, we may put on in the world, do not, and cannot make up the one article of spiritual religion. But, admitting all this, we may, perhaps, imagine that we hold in our hands an adequate re-

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medy. It may be, that, however unwelcome we now find that part of the Bible which tells of a new birth, and of sanctification, we still believe ourselves capable of gradually conquering our distaste for it. But just make the experiment. Carry your hearts through I care not how rigid a discipline, and see if you can implant in them that supreme love to God which the Gospel requires. See if you can drill yourselves into that state of mind, which shall draw from your lips in all its sincerity, and all its feeling, the exclamation of the psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee!" You may, I admit, commence a very important and useful reformation. You may restrain the corruptions of nature, and enter on all the visible duties and devotions of Christianity. You may form the habit of prayer, and take your seat at the communion, and, if you will, encounter the ridicule and reproach which are heaped on the people of God. But while you are doing all this, let me inquire if you have made it your spontaneous and leading desire to do it? To borrow an illustration, you may easily make yourselves to eat wormwood, and by repeated trials, you may acquire a habit of eating it without any great reluctance. But the question, after all, will be, Can you make yourselves to love wormwood, so as to feel a sense of uneasiness and pain when it is denied you? No more can you discipline corrupt nature into the love of spiritual and experimental religion. These are results which nothing short of Divine power can accomplish, for we are dead in trespasses and sins; and we shall remain so, if the Bible be true, whatever we may think, or may hope, till we are roused by the thundering call of Omnipotence, "Awake, ye that sleep, and arise from the dead, that Christ may give you light." When this is done, our hearts will begin to throb with the pulsations of evangelical piety, and not before. Till then, we

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might as well expect the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as that we should subdue our deep-seated distaste for the spirituality of religion. Hope may flatter, sin may deceive, and conscience may indulge us, but we are missing our aim, till we apply to the renovating power of the New Testament. Jesus Christ has offered to take the work of our regeneration into his own hands, and no man living, who has applied to him in earnest, has ever been disappointed. He is strong when we are weak, and he is able when we are helpless, and he can rescue us, and is willing to rescue us, when, left to ourselves, we should perish forever.

In the last place: I have said that Christianity alone, by providing a mediator between God and the sinner, has secured to all who trust in the merits of Christ, the reward of eternal salvation. It is true, indeed, the idea of mediation did not originate in the Bible. So far as I know, it is familiar in the concerns of religion, to every country, and every period. All the apotheoses of Heathen mythology, all the demons of the Grecian and Roman schools, and all the reputed divinities of modern Paganism, are only so many ideal mediators in the court of Heaven. Indeed, when we confine ourselves to the range of our own every-day observations,—when we see one class of persons relying on the intercession of angels and saints, and another on the innocence, uprightness, and morality of their lives, and a third, if you please, on the warmth of their zeal, and the vigor of their efforts, in the service of Christ,—in all these cases we but discover the different forms of a fancied mediation. All of them tend to one and the same point—the invention of some method for reconciling God to man. But when we come to open the New Testament, a scene is presented entirely new. Heathen atonement, self-righteous confidence, and fanatical presumption are stript of their

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plausibility, and exhibited in all their native repugnance to the character of Jehovah. One great Saviour stands revealed, who has borne our sins, who has carried our sorrows, who has taken our nature that he might suffer, and retained a Divine nature that his sufferings might avail, and who, amidst all the anguish and agonies of the Cross, has become the mediator of the new covenant for the salvation of every believer. This is the intelligence which the Bible brings us, and the Bible alone. It is the good tidings of great joy which have come down from the primitive Christians to us, and are making their way in triumph over every scheme which reason had devised before, or pride has suggested since. There is a name now given under Heaven among men, whereby they may be saved, and that is the name of Jesus of Nazareth. There is a voice issuing from the throne of God, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." There is a promise gone forth, and the perfections of the Almighty are pledged to perform it; it has cheered many a trial, and dispersed many a doubt, and illumined many a tear; and it is ringing through the sanctuary this very day, in our hearing, "Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Surely, if we are sinners, if we are covered with the leprosy of an aggravated and unutterable guilt, if the God who presides over the high and awful retributions of eternity, is holding the tremendous curse of His law in reserve for the obduracy of final impenitence; if all this be true, the news of a mediator, such as ours, so merciful and so free, ought to awaken the loudest song of our praise. No wonder that the virgin should be accosted with the triumphant salutation, "Hail thou that

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art highly favored"; and no wonder that the angels of Heaven should shout over the plains of Bethlehem the sublime and impressive anthem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

Such, my hearers, are the great doctrines of Christianity, which are peculiar to themselves. Such are some of the blessings which it has led along with it into the lives, the hearts, the hopes of mankind. Now lay your hands on your bosoms, and say, if the provision of an atonement for sin, the offer of the Holy Spirit, and the assurance of an accepted mediator, say if these be not indeed good tidings of great joy? I know, if you were called upon to answer this moment, you would unanimously answer, Yes. But that is not exactly what I want. I wish to know how, if I take you at your word, I am to account for the languor, the apathy, the death-like stillness which I see, and every body sees, on the subject of religion? Take away the public worship of the sanctuary, and what think you would be left to remind us that Jesus Christ had ever lived, or ever died, or ever provided for our future salvation? Demolish our churches, and then put down a heathen in the heart of our population, and how long might he remain there without once suspecting that we believed in a Redeemer, who had shed his heart's blood under the most painful and distressing circumstances, to rescue us from death? Might he not tarry with us year after year, and enter into our families, and converse intimately with ourselves; and, if he should discover that we were not heathen, like himself, would it not be by observing in us the want of every thing like heathen zeal or devotion?

Perhaps I mistake the matter, but just look around you, my hearers, and what do you find? Every thing but religion sought after, every thing but religion talked about, every thing but religion thought of. Go seriously into your

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own hearts. Is Jesus Christ formed there the hope of glory? Are your affections placed on things above? Do you really love your God more than you love the world? Have you found, or are you now finding, your happiest hours in your closets, and on your knees?

What more shall I say? Another Christmas has come around, and seen us, perhaps, further from the Cross of Calvary than the last. Another year is almost gone. It has carried away with it hundreds of our acquaintances and friends to the judgment seat. It has seen many of us who survive restored from the dangers of sickness, and spared a little longer; but, perhaps, it leaves us as it found us, unreconciled to God, and unprepared for eternity. There is somewhere in the Bible these passages, "My spirit shall not always strive with man," and "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

My hearers, have you ever seen the lightning of heaven strike? Have you remarked that it gave no warning of its approach? Have you observed that the flash, the roar, and the rain, were all the work of an instant? "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

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SERMON XVI.

"Walk in wisdom towards them that are without."
Colossians, iv., 5.

PERHAPS there never was a man whose deportment corresponded more exactly with his profession, than did the apostle Paul's. Soon after completing his studies, preparatory to public life, he embraced the Christian religion; and from that period, every solicitude and every effort appeared to be absorbed in the vocation wherewith he was called. Not only did he feel the Gospel himself—not only did he evince his attachment to its doctrines by an example too pure and too consistent even for his enemies to impeach—but he enjoined on all the followers of Christ the same purity. He instructed them to exemplify in practice the faith they had professed to espouse, and the temper they were bound to cherish; in a word, he taught them, instead of impeding Christianity by conduct, incompatible with its spirit, to walk in wisdom before the world—to live down the ridicule, the reproach, and the opposition marshalled against it—to maintain that sacred consistency of character which wit, if it assailed, could not depreciate, and calumny, if it reached, could not impair. This is precisely the sentiment of the text. The expression "towards them that are without," seems to regard the Church as a kind of enclosure; the same idea, probably, to which a more recent date has given the name of "the Pale of the Church." Around this enclosure, the unregenerate are supposed to stand, watching the Christian's career—scrutinizing his movements—magnifying his defects—and leaning, if I may say so, over the walls, to detect every foible, every infirm-

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ity, every imperfection, as an excuse for their own impenitence.

To those, therefore, who are clothed with the responsibility of the name of Christ, the words of the apostle are now addressed. None of us, it is presumed, can question the obligation which the passage imposes—none can be insensible to the plain and solemn duties it was designed to enforce. For this reason the subject will be thrown into a form entirely practical, and some of the ways suggested, in which professors of religion ought seriously to apply it to themselves. And, in the first place, they can never mould their example by the injunction of the text, without cherishing a spirit of kindness and affection towards each other. "Herein," says the apostle, "we are assured that we are the children of God, because we love the brethren." Indeed, there is no evidence of genuine piety more decisive than the single consideration, that the image of Christ, wherever we find it, is dear to our hearts. Should any of us, after a long and dreary exile on a foreign shore—after poverty had consumed our comforts, and misfortune wasted our hopes,—should we, at such a period, leap with transport, to grasp the hand of a fellow countryman, would it not evince an attachment to our native soil? How much more, then, in passing through the wilderness of life—where dangers surround our path, and difficulties oppose our progress—where the flowers have been withered, the beauty defaced, and the fragrance polluted by sin—how much more, I say, does that man evince his religion, who tramples the tyranny of prejudice under his feet, and hails every sincere and humble Christian as his brother in the Lord Jesus? Not only, however, does a disposition like this pass to the account of our piety, but it promotes in a high degree our personal happiness. If there be any one tendency calculated to make a man miserable, it is that microscopic scru-

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pulousness which sees a monster in every opinion, however trifling that differs from his own. To invest little things with a consequence which does not belong to them, invariably contracts the mind; and to contract the mind, is sure to impoverish the cordiality and affection of the heart. I do not mean that our sensibilities should sleep over the disclosure of real danger, or of radical corruption. But, to be constantly striving, as the sacred Scriptures say, about words to no profit—to keep up a perpetual harangue against peculiarities that do not exist, or, if they do, are of very little importance—is squandering our own peace; and especially to erect differences such as these into an obstruction of Christian harmony, is, or ought to be, a source of unceasing disquietude.

But there is another consideration more distinctly embraced by the text, which urges on the followers of Christ a charitable and conciliatory temper among themselves, and that is, the vigilance with which they are watched by the unregenerate. Every step they take is followed—any action they perform is inspected—every word they utter, and every feeling they exhibit, are weighed. Ah, my brethren, that was an impressive question of the apostle James: Can a fountain send forth, at the same place, sweet water and bitter? It is no wonder at all, that our professions should be distrusted by the impenitent—for, in the first place, they are ever on the alert, not merely to detect our infirmities, but to exaggerate them into positive sins. And besides, how can they credit our pretensions of love to God, when they witness, day after day, the seeming debility of our love to each other? How, humanly speaking, can we expect them to embark in the cause of Christ, when they see it cut up into parties—promoted by insulated and sometimes opposite efforts—and disgraced by the feelings, the feuds, and the follies of the world.

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But, on those of us who bear the name of the Lord Jesus, it is not incumbent alone, to cherish an attachment to each other. The text enjoins a second duty of equal and simultaneous obligation, that we should exhibit a sincere affection for those around us. For an intercourse with mankind, there is perhaps, in ordinary cases, no better rule of conduct, than to avoid every appearance of singularity. If exceptions should occur—if we should be placed in circumstances which render it singular for a man to obey his God, and do his duty, let us be fearlessly and faithfully singular. But in the general, we may mingle in society without exposures of this kind. We are at liberty, like the rest of men, to select our associates; and among them, as, indeed, wherever we go, it is highly important that we should cherish, the amiable, friendly, and benevolent disposition of our Heavenly Master. We may be cheerful without mirth, and serious without moroseness. Neither bigoted on the one hand, nor thoughtless on the other. We may make a proper use of the blessings of this world, without forgetting the retributions and solemnities of the next.

At all events, when we associate, as we often shall, with those who have no hope in Christ, let us imitate our Saviour, who looked on the young man, in the Gospel, and loved him. Let us view their characters and conduct in the most favorable light, and adopt towards them a corresponding deportment. The man of integrity is not always a Christian; the warm-hearted philanthropist is not always a Christian. The hero, the philosopher, the scholar, the gentleman, the friend, are not always Christians; and, in all probability, they never would be, if we should regard them with coldness and contumely, because they were not. But if, instead of this, we show them that the disciple of Jesus can respect what is respectable, and love what is lovely, we may attain by it a double object; we may borrow their

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presence in our private circles, and their patronage in our public efforts; and more than that, we may secure the precious opportunity of approaching them with the intelligence of life and immortality brought to light in the Gospel.

But, my Christian brethren, when all these duties are performed, there is one still more solemn, still more momentous, remaining. There is a temper of another kind to be manifested towards them that are without. I mean a deep and practical solicitude for their immortal souls. It is in this connexion that the text seems to disclose at once the full scope of its meaning. To the salvation of our fellow-men, more than all things besides, we are bound to devote our influence, our prayers, and our exertions. Our *influence*, because each of us, within the range of his own acquaintance, may be extensively useful. A casual remark, a single expostulation, an intelligent and affectionate counsel, especially when dictated by the friendship of years, may send some sinner to the arms of Christ. Our *prayers*, because in this, if in nothing else, we are all on a level. The closet, like Heaven, annihilates the advantages of sex, color, and condition. Every child of God can implore the visitations of the Spirit, and the revival of pure and practical piety. Our *exertions*, because, individually, we can do much, but united, through Christ strengthening us, we can do all things. Every day is opening a fresh field for Christian activity; and, if we are faithful to ourselves, to our fellow-men, and to our God, we shall not, we cannot, live in vain. But why do I enter into this detail? Where can we cast our eyes, without finding the most powerful motives to energy and action? Look, for one moment, over the theatre of human life, and how many affecting considerations crowd upon the mind! The friends of our bosoms, the companions of our childhood, hundreds who are dear to us by every tie of affection, of kindred, and of nature, des-

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titute of a hope in Christ! The great panting for preferment, the rich rioting in luxury, the gay bewildered by dissipation, the moral resting on their righteousness, and even the serious halting between two eternities, but all, all moving on to the judgment, and yet wrapt in sleep! And *are*, then, any left to plead their case at the Throne of Mercy? Any to wrestle with the God of Israel? Are there no sentinels stationed on the walls of Jerusalem? Will no one sound the alarm? Will no one snatch the trumpet, and break the slumbers of death? Where are those who call themselves Christians? Are their lamps trimmed and burning, to irradiate the darkness around them? Are their prayers swelling through the Heavens, that God would arise, and have mercy upon Zion, that the time to favor her, yea, that the set time, might come?

My brethren, this is a solemn subject. Let it follow us when we leave these altars. Let it go with us to the silence and solitude of retirement. Let it rouse our spiritual languor, and invigorate our fidelity to Christ. Let it cast and keep us on our knees, and there ring the tremendous question through our hearts, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

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SERMON XVII.

"The carnal mind is enmity against God."
Romans, viii., 7.

Every man who reads the Bible must have marked the pointed, not to say the singular, manner in which it speaks of the human family. He must have seen how it sweeps each and every one of them under the charge of a common character of hostility to God, and fixes upon them all, without reserve, the unsparing epithets of guilt and condemnation.

On what principle, my hearers, is this to be accounted for? The case is certainly different in the ordinary intercourse of life. Looking around us, we find some men, by the dignity of their virtues, and the lustre of their accomplishments, exalted so far above the level of the rest, that they deserve an entirely different classification. But whenever the pages of Inspiration are consulted, we hear but one general language applied to all the descendants of Adam. A language which admits of no exception, and listens to no compromise from the opinions of the world,—which plainly tells us that whatever visible decencies we may possess, there is something by nature materially wrong in every individual's heart, and that man, not this class nor that class, but the whole, have become dead in trespasses and sins.

Now, if the positions be true which I have attempted, upon two former Sabbaths, to establish; if, in the first place, every one of us, as a thing of course, is born with a nature depraved, and prompting us to evil,—and if, in the second place, every one of us, as a matter of fact, has

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yielded to that nature, instead of resisting it, and actually *done* evil,—it becomes a subject of the deepest solemnity and the last importance, to inquire how far the catastrophe has extended—in what degree the charge of sinfulness does really belong to us—whether, in short, we have all a common disease, which, little as we may discover it in the extremities, is fastened with a fearful violence upon the vitals. It is to this discussion that we are now invited by the words of the text; and it will carry along with it one consideration, of which it is best we should be reminded upon the threshold. In ordinary discourses, nothing is more easy than to apply this part to one of our neighbors, and that part to another, and thus, after travelling through all our acquaintances, we find, when the preacher is done, that we have contrived to divert the application from ourselves entirely. But, to-day, the whole of our charity may remain at home. The business we have now to transact, is confined to our own bosoms, and our own characters, and our own hopes. If there be any one passage in the Bible which is meant for all of us, without exception, which knocks at every pew where we are sitting, and says to every person in it, "Thou art the man," it is the short but comprehensive sentence which has been selected for the text: "The carnal mind," says the apostle, "is enmity against God." And what is the "carnal mind"? The expression occurs only in Scripture, and from Scripture, therefore, are we to learn its import. It is the mind of a sinner in his natural state, unpardoned and unregenerated. And what is enmity against God? Here, too, we speak only on the authority of Revelation. It is not hatred to the Supreme Being, for the sake of hating him. It is not a thirst for revenge, and a corresponding vexation, that we cannot gratify it. It is not an entire and ungrateful insensibility to the mercies we receive. Feelings like these the lowest abandonment

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of human nature does not harbor. But it is the want of every thing like spontaneous disinterested love to God, of every thing like that holiness which angels have, and which we shall have, when, and only when, we are renovated by the Holy Spirit.

Here, then, my brethren, we are all, in one sense, brought upon a level. Of the best of us and of the worst of us, it is equally true, that we are laboring under the same great moral defect, that, in a natural state, there is no principle of holiness in the heart, and, therefore, nothing which can carry us to Heaven, whatever may be our standing or our virtues in the eye of the world. I do not mean that the unregenerate have no regard for religion. They have not only this, but anxiety also. In all of them, probably, more or less, the subject awakens serious thought. But the question is, whether they have religion itself? Nor do I mean that they are all equally sinful. The man of morality and honor is not upon a par with the reprobate. But the point is, whether they may not differ never so much from each other, and yet neither of them be a follower of Jesus Christ. It is not, finally, my meaning, that the future punishment of the unregenerate will be equal. The sufferings of eternity consist in the remorse and reproaches of conscience; hence it is *impossible* for a man to suffer, except for what he has done, or for what he has left undone. If you had issued an order to two of your servants, and one neglects it, and falls asleep, while the other neglects it, and sets to plundering your house, there is no doubt that both are guilty, and that neither has any claim to your favor; but you surely will not inflict upon them the same punishment.

No, my hearers, the doctrine of the text involves no absurdity, and no injustice. On the one hand, Inspiration has stated in the clearest manner the terms upon which we

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may be saved; on the other, the apostle comes forward, and tells us, to-day, that no man, in his natural state, has the least feeling of holiness or of love to God, without which every hope of salvation is groundless.

Now, brethren, what I have to ask of you is, if St. Paul has really spoken the truth? To this inquiry I need not apologise for expecting your serious attention, for certainly it is connected with the highest allotments of the human soul, with all that is valuable here, and all that is great and lofty hereafter. The doctrine, then, to be established is, that no unregenerate man has the least holiness, or the least love to God. I prove this melancholy and humiliating position, first, from the history of the world. What is history, but the record of perfidy, and disorder, and crime? Begin where we will, and ransack, if we please, every age, and every country, and we find the earth little else than one vast slaughter-house. Here, Paganism is seen kneeling at the shrine of idolatry, and shouting in triumph over the march of its desolations. There, is Christendom kindling the fires of the martyrs, and soaking the standard of the Cross in their blood. On the one hand, where ignorance and savagism have presided over the seclusion of the wilderness, nothing is heard but the cry of revenge, and the yell of the war-whoop, and the dying shriek of the victim. Fly to the other hand, where Christianity and science have shed refinement upon life, and we see the *most polished nation on earth* leading the infuriated efforts of Atheism, dethroning Almighty God, and eternising the slumbers of death, by a decree of the empire. This is man, under every form of society, Jewish, Pagan, Mahometan, or Christian. And is it possible that, in a nature like this, there can be a single pulsation of holiness?—a nature the very same as we possess, which time does not extinguish, which situation does not change, which,

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for nearly six thousand long and dismal years, has invariably, in the same circumstances, and with the same temptation, rushed on to the same dreadful excess.

Secondly, I prove the apostle's doctrine, that in our natural state we are altogether unholy from the observation of mankind. It is not my wish to send you abroad among the debased and abandoned, to lead you into our public receptacles of crime. The language which prisons, and penitentiaries, and places of exile, speak to us, is too loud and too emphatical to need a repetition. Nor will I recount, as recount I truly might, the ten thousand forms of depravity which we detect in our intercourse with each other—the treachery—the selfishness—the pride—the ambition—the hypocrisies—that meet our eyes whereever we choose to turn them, from the highest to the lowest classes of society. Leave these things out of the computation—for even could we or did we completely abstain from them, it would furnish no evidence of our holiness, because our abstinence might arise from a variety of other motives. Look rather upon the very fairest side of the picture, and see if there be any thing to comfort us. Where are we to find the indications of love to God? Is it in the warmth and fervor of our family religion? Is it in the care with which we husband our leisure hours for the devotions of the closet? Is it in the animated eye and kindling countenance, with which we tell each other with tears what God has done for our souls? On the contrary, have not subjects like these become almost synonymised with enthusiasm and superfluity? Alas, my brethren, you must see that even if the heart had nothing to do in serving God, we serve Him so little, so very little, that it deserves not the name of affection. But when we come to know that we must love Him, and that too supremely, or not at all, we cannot in candor deny, that it actually is not at all.

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Thirdly, I prove that the unregenerate have no holiness from the Bible. What is the language in which they are then addressed? Is it under the endearing names of children—friends—favorites? No; they have not so much as a promise, or a consolation, from one lid to the other, except on condition of breaking off from their sins. They are called the enemies of God—the heirs of perdition—lovers of themselves—the degenerate plants of a strange vine—the children of disobedience—the men of this world. Open the oracles of Jéhovah, my hearers, and judge for yourselves: "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Whose carnal mind? "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Whose heart? "And God saw that every imagination of the thoughts of man was only evil continually." What is meant by man? "Therefore, they that are in the flesh cannot please God, for to be carnally minded is death." What is the import of this? "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness unto him—neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Can we torture language like this into any softened or qualified meaning? Brethren, I will not tire your patience, nor impeach your candor, by pressing the evidence of the Bible further. The whole volume might be brought to bear upon the same point; but enough has been said—we may sleep on in composed and unsuspicious impenitence—we may cling with the grasp of the second death to the world,—but sure I am, that if we believe at all in Revelation, the judgment and the conscience must be convinced.

Fourthly, and finally, I prove that the unregenerate have no holiness from the experience of our own hearts. It is a very singular and alarming fact, that no man who appears to have had his heart changed, is disposed to deny the doc-

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trine; but aside from the testimony of Christians, I wish to appeal to the unregenerate themselves. Let me ask them to stand up at the bar of their consciences for a moment, and surrounded by the solemnities of the presence of God, reply each and every one of them to questions such as these: Are not my affections engrossed decidedly more by some other object, than by the service of my Maker? Have I any thing of that warm and earnest attachment to God, which I have sometimes felt towards an earthly friend? Have I even for a single hour of my life, found more enjoyment in secret religion, than in some favorite worldly scheme? Am I not really ashamed to take up my cross and follow my Saviour to the sacramental table, and to the self-denials and mortifications of a Christian life? And if I were convinced that my salvation was sure without experimental religion, would not my heart, of its own accord, be satisfied with mere morality, without longing at all for spiritual godliness? My hearers, how you may answer these inquiries, it is not for me to conjecture. If the honest verdict of conscience should be against you, do not put up the visionary pretension of love to God. Do not hunt over the tedious and constrained duties of self-righteousness, which you may have performed for a title to Heaven. Rest assured, that in His eye, who looks into the deepest and darkest workings of the heart, nothing but that heart itself, in all the sincerity of its penitence, and all the cordiality of its love, and all the entireness of its self-surrender, will be received as the evidence of that holiness, "without which no man can see the Lord." Thus have I attempted to exhibit and enforce the true import of the text. I am aware, that some of you may plead a sort of offset to it, by saying, that you do many things, and willingly too, which the law of God requires of you. But this, my hearers, is no

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proof of genuine love to God. You may do them, not because He requires it, but because it suits your interest, or your humor, or, perhaps, because you are anxious for some such evidence of personal religion. But, suppose your motive be a direct desire to do that which is pleasing to God. Here neither do we find any proof of genuine love. It may be very convenient for me to please the man, whom, in the honest feeling of my heart, I look upon with dislike. The hand may perform a thousand acts of compliance with his will, while the heart, all the time, may regret the necessity to which it is driven. But further still: You may say that you have had within you the consciousness of a sensible love to God. And what sort of Being was He? A God of mere natural perfection—unconnected with the blood of the Cross, and unarmed with the attributes of holiness, and of hatred towards sin? Still, then, your confidence is built upon the sand. The God whom sinners are to love is God in Christ—the Being who bids us sanctify Him in our hearts—who receives us only on our knees, and in the dust—who calls to us from the Throne of His holiness, "Come out from the world, and be separate, and I will be unto you a Father, and ye shall be unto me for sons and for daughters." If we have done so, well—if not, no plea, and no apology we can urge, will shield us from the sweeping imputation of having a carnal mind, which is enmity against Him.

There are those, undoubtedly, who will feel a sensible recoil from so severe and humiliating a doctrine, and all I can say to palliate the representation, is, that it comes from the pages of the Bible. It is a doctrine, which lies at the base of Christianity. It is one of those doctrines which the apostles spent their lives in preaching—which clung to the witnesses of the truth in the vallies of Piedmont and Savoy—which attended Huss, and Jerome, and Hamilton, to the

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stake—which cheered Hooper, Ridley, Cranmer, and Latimer, in the fires of martyrdom—and which are now moving on, self-impelled, to fill and enrapture the universe with the mercy, and glory, and love of God. Upon ourselves, too, it seems to me, that the sentiment we have been discussing applies with a most solemn emphasis. It is easy, indeed, to look around among acquaintances and friends, and while the dignity of their visible accomplishments meets the eye, to forget that any thing more is required of them. But O, when the Bible comes along with its disclosures—when it tears aside the guise of all our external decencies and virtues, and reveals the mountain of sin that lies beneath them—when it proclaims in a voice of ten thousand thunders, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and that we may get very near to the kingdom of Heaven, and yet never step over the threshold—then it is, that we find the overwhelming importance of spiritual religion—then we realize at once, what must have been the feelings of Jesus Christ, when he cried with tears of solicitude, over Jerusalem, "O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

After all, however, there is one consolation which enlivens the most oppressive view of the subject, and that is, the fountain of mercy is still open. Still may the sinner approach—still is the voice of invitation resounding through the ranks of wretchedness and guilt. And are there none here who will listen—who will believe, that to-day is the accepted time? My hearers, how you may feel, I cannot tell, but I confess, there is upon my mind, I know not what impression, that we are not always to remain so completely unmelted and unmoved. There must be a time coming, at least, I hope in God there may be, when we shall start up from our lethargy—when the inquiry shall pass from one to

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the other of us, What shall I do to be saved?—and when absorbed in the visions of eternity, many a poor unpardoned sinner within these walls, shall cause the angels of Heaven to rejoice that he has repented. "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

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SERMON XVIII.*

"Take the child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."
Exodus, ii., 8.

The task assigned me to-day, my hearers, is one, I confess to you, which I would willingly have been spared. After witnessing the recent evidence of your generosity—after seeing you only two Sabbaths ago, crowding around the altar of humanity, to deposit your alms,—I acknowledge it is unpleasant so soon to repeat the work of solicitation. Had you given nothing *then*, I might plead with you *now*. Had I discovered, when the call of distress *then* reached your ears, that you turned hard-hearted away, I might *now* speak to you with redoubled warmth and energy. But contrary to all this, you came forward with cheerfulness to the invitation. You cast your mites into the treasury at a period when the pressure of the times might almost have justified your refusal to do so; and I will not conceal that such conduct, although the surest pledge of success in asking your charity again, has thrown over me a feeling of sensible reluctance in being called to make the application. In another view of the subject, however, I find much to inspire confidence.

The institution on whose behalf I address you has already that sort of standing which saves me the trouble of pushing its claims. You have seen it from its origin to the present hour, passing, unhurt, the different stages of its progress, till now, if I may say so, its character is formed. None of us at this late day need be told, that, in bestowing

* Preached in behalf of a Female Orphan Asylum.

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our bounty here, we do an act which is not merely dictated by benevolence, but approved by the soundest maxims of political economy. I say political economy, and yet a spirit of discouragement has arisen, I admit, both in England and America, towards the general principle of public charities. For why? Because, by holding out the offer of gratuitous support, they go to perpetuate idleness and dissuade it from every effort to take care of itself. Why is it that the poor rates for the last ten years have increased, on both sides the Atlantic, more than thirty per cent. beyond the proportionate increase of population? There is no cause for it which we can see, unless it be that charitable institutions, in the same time, have been multiplied in very nearly the same ratio. All this, however, has nothing to do with the political economy of maintaining indigent female orphans. *They* constitute a splendid and honorable exception to the rule; and in every document on the subject of pauperism, foreign or domestic, the provision made for their support is invariably shielded from the censure to which ordinary forms of systematical charity are exposed. The reason of it is obvious. None of the objections which lie so formidably in the one case can be detected for a moment in the other. For example: there is no facility for idleness; on the contrary, the inmates of the asylum are trained to every species of occupation which their probable allotment in life may require. Again: there are no encouragements to poverty. So far from it, when the individuals become of an age to gain their own subsistence, they are expected, in the pursuit of a virtuous and honorable employment, to provide for themselves. What less, I would ask, can be done for them, if any thing be done, than this? What less than to rescue them from the world till they are prepared with safety to enter it; to shelter the tender plants from exposure till they may be exposed with-

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out the certainty of ruin? No, my hearers, never will an institution like this withdraw its claims to public patronage till helplessness ceases to deserve relief and innocence to require protection. If it were supposable that a female child, thrown parentless on the world, and especially in a slave country, where the chance of labor is often the necessity of degradation—that such an one, with no instructions to follow and no example to imitate, should travel along to womanhood without a lost character and extinguished virtues, and blasted hopes, if she ever had any—could we conceive of such an event in the common course of things, then, but not till then, might we rally philosophy enough to lower the Female Orphan Asylum a single inch from its present dignified and lofty elevation.

But it is time that I return to the passage which I have read to you from the sacred Scriptures.

During the reign of one of the most celebrated of the Egyptian monarchs, an order was issued to check the increase of the Hebrews who resided in the country, by destroying all their male children. At that period, Moses, the subsequent author of the Pentateuch, was in the cradle. His mother, hunted and terrified by the public officers, concealed her child in a basket under the banks of the Nile, while his little sister, as being less liable to suspicion, stood at a distance to await the almost hopeless event. In this situation a daughter of the king, whom Josephus calls Thermutes, while walking near the river, discovered the basket and sent one of her attendants to bring it. It was accordingly brought to her, and, when opened, she saw the infant, who, from being so long deserted, was weeping. As might have been presumed, she was extremely affected herself; but, aware of the royal edict, instead of taking the babe home, she instructed his little sister, who was standing by, to go for a Hebrew nurse. The messenger obeyed, and

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on her return brought with her a female whom the princess addressed in the words of the text—"Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." We need not wonder that the woman readily undertook the office, for she proved to be none else than the child's own mother.

Such is the story as it is told in the simple and touching language of Inspiration, and such is the intrepid heroism of philanthropy, and such is the mysterious way in which God becomes a father to the fatherless, by making use of the feeble instrumentalities entrusted to mankind. Alas, my hearers, how affecting a representation does this narrative convey of these helpless orphans before us! True, they are not abandoned to the waters of the Nile; they are not condemned by the cruelty of despotism to the horrible process of premature strangulation. But what then? They are *orphans:* and where, in the whole variety of human epithets, is a name which carries along with it so many images of sorrow and woe? They are *orphans:* and if you have had a father to fold you in his arms and bless you, and a mother to press you to her heart and call you her child,—if you have felt the kiss of parental tenderness imprinted on your lips, or the tear of parental solicitude dropping on your cheeks, you can imagine their condition. They are *orphans:* and through all the vast profusion of this world's magnificence and wealth, not a dwelling opens where they can go, and say, "We are at home!"

Human life is sweetened by the serenity of domestic peace, but it is not for them. The fireside collects the happy family, and gladdens the brow of affection, but they have no part there. Silent, solitary, and forlorn, they look to the sky for their shelter, and to mankind for their friends. One thing, however, blessed be God, they *do* possess; and that is, an asylum, which has taken them, and nursed them on the bosom of its charity. From the wreck of all their

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earliest and warmest expectations, it has devised a plan for their rescue; it has supplied their wants, and cheered their despondency; it has fed their hunger, and clothed their nakedness, and visited their affliction, and housed them at last beneath the roof of a protecting beneficence. Tell me, ye patrons of deserted misfortune, whence came your project of mercy? Was it not from mothers? from those who had looked forward to the possibility of lying themselves upon the bed of death, with their children clustering around them in the interesting attitude of predestined and unprovided orphanage? If so, the event is explained. If so, it is easy to account for all you have yet done, for all you may do hereafter; and let me only say, that if there be on earth a spectacle of unrivalled sublimity and glory, it is when the loveliness of woman embarks in the sacred enterprise of collecting the wandering little outcasts of her sex, and leading them along, with a mother's care, in the paths of innocence and virtue. Do not think, however, you who have achieved all this, that you will go unpaid. No: in the language of our text, you will *have your wages*, and "the bread which you have cast upon the waters will return to you after many days." Methinks you would be rewarded enough, could these children find words to testify their gratitude. In listening to them, they would say, You ransomed us from the contagion of the world. When our dear parents were sleeping in the dust, you came forward and offered us a home. You shed over us the tears of pity, and we saw your eyes fill, and your bosoms throb, while you heard the tale of our wretchedness. You have been our mothers, our more than mothers. You have fed us, when we were "poor and fatherless, and had none to help us."

But this is not all. Let me show you your reward in another light. Go, then,—you know my meaning; if not, I dare not tell you. Go where woman is incarcerated in the

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sepulchre of her own pollution! But for you, nine out of ten of these orphans would sooner or later have been there, consigned to the irretrievable damnation of that earthly hell. And O, if you have saved but one,—if one by your instrumentality has been kept back from that terrific and appalling charnel-house, where all within is horror, and all around is desolation,—if this single triumph has followed the march of your benevolence, your wages are already paid; you have gained a laurel which does not crimson the brow it decorates. And if the justice were done on earth which is done in Heaven, your names would live in columns of marble, while hundreds of monarchs and heroes, dripping with blood, would be lost, as they ought to be, in irrecoverable oblivion.

And now, my brethren, I turn to you. Although reluctant, on some accounts, to renew my appeal to your generosity so soon, there are others on which I feel a sensible encouragement, and especially so, because for a year to come no public call will again be made upon you. This, therefore, if I may say so, is the last discount-day of your benevolence; and if I thought so meanly of any one of you, as to deem you capable of evading the demand, I would speak accordingly. I would ask you to throw in all that you had; and if you had nothing, I would request you to borrow a neighbor's pencil, and write an obligation; and if you could not do this, I would solicit you to deposit some article as a pledge, to be redeemed hereafter. But, my hearers, I should be insincere to push the subject with anything like such a vehemence. If I know my heart, I would not have you give this hour what you might withhold the next. On the contrary, had I never so great a power to goad you up to an artificial excitement, I should blush to use it in a cause like that of this asylum—an asylum for helpless female orphans, who know no other parents than you, and no other support than your liberality.

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After all, however, it would be foregoing my duty, not to tell you that there are some motives to our charity to-day, which ought not to be passed over in silence. We are called upon to help forward a sex to whom we owe much of our happiness, in a work which they have deeply at heart. They have asked our assistance; and perhaps I mistake the matter, but I have yet to learn, that ladies who pay eight dollars annually themselves, besides their services, will find us a single shilling behindhand.

Again: the asylum seriously *deserves* our support. It has sheltered in all fifty-four female orphans; and what has become of them? Why, twenty-nine are there still; three are dead; a few have been removed by their friends; and the rest, where are they?—lost? indolent? or abandoned? No, my hearers, they are placed in reputable and virtuous families, to earn their own subsistence.

Again, and I have no more to say: You see before you the affecting group of dependence and orphanage for which I plead. They once had a father to guard, and a mother to counsel them, but they have them no more. These are my little clients, lying at your mercy. Will you spurn them from you? Shall they go from this place with a fresh burst of tears over their unpitied misfortune? Then, be it so. The God of the fatherless will take care of them; He will fold them to His heart, and bless them. The Lord Jesus will seek them out, as he did us, in the solitude of their uncompassionated bereavement, and cheer them, as he has cheered us, with the accents of protection and mercy. Have you ever thought, my hearers, that there is a most impressive sense in which we once were all left fatherless and poor? Have you ever looked back to the time when we were cast into the open field, weltering in our blood, and barred to a heart-rending distance from our Heavenly parent. Yes, and there was no hope but in the charities of Christ.

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Did he stand unmelted and unmoved over the scene of desolation? Did he hesitate in the offer of a gratuitous relief? Did he say, as he might have said, I cannot leave the joys of Heaven to go down and bleed, and suffer, and die. Ah, no! He *did* leave Heaven. He *did* bleed, and suffer, and die. He looked upon a world of orphan sinners, unpitied and unprovided, and cried, Save them, O, save them, and I will be myself the ransom. While the prodigal was yet a great way off, the father ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and said, "This my son was lost, and is found." To-day, my hearers, we are called to imitate the high example of the Saviour. There are the little sufferers who are pleading for our help. They lift to us their imploring looks, as if to say, Do not blame us for our misfortune, for it was God, and not we, who laid our parents in the grave. There they sit, waiting the result of their appeal, with tearful eyes and throbbing hearts. And O, what a gladsome hour will it be, if this anniversary, which reminds them, on the one hand, of their dependence, should show them, on the other, that they can never want while you are living to provide for them.

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SERMON XIX.

"And they all with one consent began to make excuse."
Luke, xiv, 18.

You need not be reminded, my hearers, that the parable of the Supper, to which this passage belongs, was intended to represent the success of our Saviour's Gospel. A nobleman, on the marriage of his son, is supposed to have provided a magnificent entertainment. Invitations were issued through the circle of his acquaintance, and at the appointed hour, waiting only for the arrival of the guests, he despatched his attendants to inform them that all things were ready. And what think you was their return for this welcoming hospitality? Why, merely the hollow and hypocritical ceremony of pleading other engagements. When the time arrived for the festival, it appeared that what with farms, and what with merchandise, and what with domestic cares, all who were invited had with one consent made excuse. Very much in the same way, I repeat it, do mankind contrive to evade the invitations of the Saviour. Hence it seems to have been his aim, when he spoke the parable, to denote, primarily perhaps, the perverseness of the Jews in rejecting his Messiahship, but chiefly the perverseness of sinners, in every age, in putting away from them the blessings of evangelical religion. The feast of the Gospel is still open. Still does Christianity offer her repast of joys unspeakable and full of glory. Still the bountiful Provider of the entertainment is sending forth his repeated and encouraging invitations. But all this time we cling to some frivolous excuse, and while every preparation is made, and

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nothing wanting but our acceptance, we turn unpersuaded away.

There is, in the first place, a class of persons who palliate their neglect of religion by pleading the want of time to attend to it. This apology, ungrateful and ungenerous as it may seem, is frequently, I have no doubt, grounded in truth. Hundreds of men there are who parcel out life into those nice apportionments, which really absorb the whole, and leave the concerns of the soul entirely unprovided for. For example: they allot the morning to business and the afternoon to the hospitalities of the table, and the evening to a necessary relaxation, and a liberal portion of the night to the current amusements; and the plain arithmetic of the whole is, that they find not a single half-hour for the service of that Being whose goodness has given them the entire twenty-four. But suppose, after such a computation, we stand up at the bar of conscience and inquire by what right we involve ourselves in this bewildering maze of occupation—on what principle do we multiply around us the cares of business and the calls of pleasure, and then, by a curious sort of reasoning, make them the excuses for our impenitence?

My hearers, let us not be blinded by this delusive sophistry. We can all husband time enough, if we would, for the concerns of religion; but the secret matter of fact is, that we look upon them as insipid; we have no heart for the undertaking; and we turn away, not for want of leisure, but for want of relish, the moment the subject is presented. When we come to make the calculation, our inconsistent apology stares us in the face. We find so many hours devoted to amusement, and so many to the table, and so many to doing nothing; and after all, we have no time for these famished and neglected spirits within us, which are travelling on to the retributions of an impartial eter

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nity. Well might the dying Wolsey regret that he had given to his king the service which he owed to his God; and when we, too, are lying on our death-beds, or, at all events, a little beyond that period, we shall look back with anguish upon days and months devoted to the world, which, had they been applied to another use, might have rescued our souls from the infliction of final punishment.

There is *another* description of men who evade the invitations of the Gospel by pronouncing religion unfriendly to their pleasures and enjoyments. If this were indeed the case, I would burn—I will not say the Bible, for that not merely offers us happiness but teaches us duty—but I would burn this parable, and with it a part of nearly every page in the volume which represents Christianity under the form of a gladsome and rejoicing festival. No, my hearers, there are few, if any of us, who have not seen the hour, even in our wildest career of folly, when the humble, unobtrusive Christian, with an eye kindling in the confidence of his faith and a hand sustaining the helplessness of poverty and misfortune, and a heart throbbing high with the hope of a blessed immortality—when such an one we have met upon the great journey of life, it has made us secretly wish as we passed him that we were in his situation. And such is the only pain which genuine godliness ever gives—the pain of a deep and a festering disquietude to the men of the world, by reminding them of their madness in squandering away the treasure of eternity.

I admit, indeed, that there is a sense in which religion becomes unfriendly to our enjoyments, and it is when our enjoyments are unfriendly to us and to God. She will not go with us to the gaming-house, and give us license to play our property, our characters, our families, and our souls away. She will not sit down with us to the table of revelry, and smile at the boisterous excess of dissipation and the rapid

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interchange of obscenity and profaneness. And there are other places, too, where she will not attend us, or, if she does, it will be with closed lips and a drooping head, till the assembly disperses, when her appearance is hailed with joy, not because her presence is wanted, but because it gives a kind of sanction to the presence of the rest. If it be on such accounts as these that you complain of Christianity as the damper of your pleasures, go on complaining. She offers you not a moment's compromise. Pursue your own course. Not a word more need be said, unless it be that a day is coming when you may perhaps wish, too late, that you had back again the heavy price you are now paying for your favorite enjoyments.

There is *another* class of persons who ground their neglect of religion upon the improprieties of professed Christians. How often do we hear the triumphant remark going the rounds of impenitence—"These are your boasted saints. *These* are men who sit down at the communion, and yet are no better than hundreds around them, who make no such noisy pretensions to piety." Now, my hearers, I grant that all you say is true; that there are persons of the very stamp to which you allude. But why do you blame them? "Because," you reply, and very justly, "their conduct does not comport with the spirit of religion." This, then, is coming to the very point I wished to secure. I have found out that you understand what true religion is, so well that you can detect the smallest deviation in its professors.

I call upon you, therefore, to be Christians, without those failings which you find in others. You know what is right, and I tell you plainly, that if you perish, you will perish under the terrific condemnation of the servant in the parable, who knew his Lord's will, and yet did it not. Nor do I

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stop there. You have discovered that the professed disciples of Christ are inconsistent in their deportment. You have seen that the Church is corrupt; and in the name of the Almighty God, I put upon you the responsibility of coming forward and helping to reform it. Come and pray for it. Come and tell its inconstant and unworthy members, that they are bringing reproach upon the cause which they pretend to have espoused. Come and tell them, that their conduct has long kept you back from the Saviour, and set before them an example of that purity, and heavenly-mindedness, and circumspection, which you so well know to be required of a Christian in his walk through life. This is the high and commanding purpose to which you are solemnly bound to devote the knowledge you possess of what religion ought to be; and I have a right to hope, and I do hope, that God will give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids, till you take up your Cross, and make it your first and great undertaking, to bring about a reformation in the Church of Christ.

There is, finally, *another* set of apologists among the men of the world, who palliate their neglect by pleading their inability to perform the duties of religion. We call upon them to begin the pursuit of experimental piety; and they tell us, if, indeed, they tell us anything, that they have no disposition to set about it. Again, we inquire, why they have no disposition for a business so alarmingly important; and they reply, that however desirous they may be of an interest in Christ, the work of changing their hearts is completely beyond their power, and, therefore, they can do nothing. As if the culprit at the bar of justice could extenuate his crime by alleging that he had no disposition to abstain from it. As if we can escape from the charge of sinfulness by pleading that we are sinful. As if we might ward off the unspar-

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ing curse of the Godhead in the judgment day, by urging the very hearts which had rebelled against Him as our apology! But where, my hearers, is the secret of all this pretended inability? Have we not a common Bible, a common Saviour, a common offer of mercy? Are we not moving on, one as much as another, to the tribunal of Christ? Are not our souls clothed with the same essential principles of immortality? Where, then, is the difference, except in this plain and simple point, that the children of God have done what the unregenerate of their own accord have left undone? But allow your excuse to be true, in all its dimensions; allow it legitimate reasoning, that because you have no heart to perform your duty, you are therefore unable to perform it, and because you have put the performance out of your power, you must therefore leave the transaction in the hands of God. Does it follow, that you have *nothing* to do? Are you calmly to settle down in the conclusion, that you may continue unconcerned, adding sin to sin, and waiting with indolent composure the interference of the Deity? Suppose your dwellings were on fire, while you were stretched helpless upon the bed of disease, would you look quietly on while the conflagration was roaring around you? or would you rally the most agonising efforts of nature to cry for deliverance? Suppose you were lying palsied and motionless, on the brink of a burning and bursting crater, would you take your ease, as you now do? Would you hug, as you now do, the eager hopes, and the fascinating expectancies of the world, and rest satisfied in the peril of your exposure, because you could do nothing? or would you shriek for help, and not once only, nor twice, but again, and again, and again, till you found it? You see, then, upon what footing your own acknowledgments will place you, in reference to the work of your salvation; and, O, if there should be, in the disclosures of futurity, one sentence more dreadful and

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more damning than the rest, it must fall on his head, whose excuse is that he could do nothing himself, when the only object of Jesus Christ in expiring on the Cross was to do every thing for him, if he but wished it done, without money, and without price.

My hearers, you may think that the apologies I have been enumerating are too empty, too absurd, too outrageous upon decency, to influence a single one in the postponement of his preparations for a future life. But let me ask you to retire within the reach of a truth-telling conscience, and see if, after all, you yourselves do not find something about you which ought to awaken uneasiness? See if you have not lived months and years in the absolute character of unpardoned sinners, with apologies, to say the least of it, of close affinity with those I have named? I do not wish you to tell me, in so many words, but I wish you seriously and solemnly to tell your own souls, and to profit by the information. I wish you to look back on the chequered scene over which you have travelled up to this hour, and say if there has been one solitary day when you were prepared for the decisions of the judgment-seat? Say if the invitations of the Gospel, when, indeed, you have bestowed any attention on them, have ever accomplished a further effect than to set you all with one consent to making excuses. Say if you could rationally hope, were the present hour to be your last hour, that you have a friend to stand by you while you are dying, and to conduct your spirit through the solemnities of the final day, and to throw open for you the gates of that city whose builder and whose maker is God. These are questions which all of us, sooner or later, will pronounce important; and I have only to add, that before the heavy seal of eternity is set upon our fate, they must be unequivocally answered. The season of apologies is passing away. The period is approaching, when all the little evasions on which

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we now rely will be driven to the winds; and when the same heart-searching God, who is now issuing the invitations of mercy, will thunder through the trembling ranks of impenitence the last and irrevocable sentence of an insulted Saviour, "None of those men who were bidden shall taste of my supper."

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SERMON XX.

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup."

1 *Corinthians*, xi., 28.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper, my hearers, is among the most important advantages of our religion. By this, perhaps, more than by any one thing besides, are we made to pause in our worldliness, and to feel as we ought to feel, like sinners on the road to eternity. The reason is, it brings periodically round to us the recollection of our Saviour's atonement for mankind—of his so wonderful love for them as to lead him on to the appalling ceremonies of crucifixion, and finally of his affectionate injunction, "Do this in remembrance of me," bequeathed with his last breath to a sinful and perishing world. Surely, if to these things we have been insensible; if, in the forgetfulness of all his sufferings, we have denied him his dying request, by keeping away from his table, surely our hearts, however hard, must feel, when reminded of our ingratitude, and especially so in the reflection, that we have lived from month to month upon his mercy, that he has spared us a little longer, and a little longer, up to the present hour; and, after all, perhaps, we are at this moment as little prepared to sit down at the sacramental board, as if it were the first and the only instance of our omission. But I will suppose that we *have* gone to his table. The question comes immediately up, with what feelings have we done so? It may have been from fear, or from fashion, or from policy, or from a thousand other motives, which give not a particle of real religiousness to the transaction. We may have thought to ef-

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fect a compromise with Jesus Christ, and, while we attend his worship and his sacraments on the Sabbath, we are, perhaps, indulging in the vanities and follies of the world through the week. And who does not know that hundreds of persons are seen at the Supper of the Lord, who carry along with them in life not a single evidence of vital and experimental religion; in fact, whose only preparation for it consists in the mechanical process of resting a few days, from their wonted follies, and reading a few serious books, and saying over a few prayers, in order, as they call it, to be ready for receiving the Communion? In this state of things, when we find, as find we do all around us, so much entire neglect, and so much self-deception, and so much half-way performance, we need not wonder that the apostle should require a man to examine himself, and so to eat of that bread and drink of that cup. *Our whole business, therefore, to-day, is self-examination.*

When we have answered, at the bar of conscience, what are our *views of sin*,—what *are our feelings towards Jesus Christ*,—what are *the terms we keep with the world*,—and what *are our ideas of Heaven*,—then may we determine whether or not we are prepared to join the people of God in the expected solemnities of the coming Sabbath.

What then are our *views of sin?* The Bible affirms, that in a state of nature we have nothing about us but guilt,—that not a pulsation of holiness beats through our hearts till they are completely renovated. Now, all this we may admit as a doctrine; but the question is, what do our consciences say to it? Do our feelings, of their own accord, respond Yes, when we are told that the carnal mind is enmity against God? Have we something within us which knows by experience the alarming extent of our depravity—which is perfectly conscious that all we can do in the work of our salvation, is to cast ourselves on the Divine

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sovereignty alone, and lift up the single cry for mercy? Thus far, then, every thing is right. But here the inquiry comes in upon us, whether this view of our sinfulness has drawn forth that repentance which the Gospel requires? I do not ask whether it has awakened an occasional sensation of remorse, nor whether it convinces us that we *ought* to be penitent, nor whether it makes us uneasy about the retributions of another world,—but has it produced that godly sorrow which we should feel, just as much and just as spontaneously if sin were never to be punished? Are we mourning every day and every hour, that our attainments in grace are so small, that we accomplish no more victory over ourselves, and that our affections are so languid, and our examples so unworthy in the service of our Master and our God.

Again: What are our feelings *towards Jesus Christ?* "Him," says the apostle, "God hath set forth as a propitiation, through faith in his blood, for the remission of sins." We see on the threshold, therefore, in what light we must look upon the Saviour. We must have a certain kind of faith in him to begin with, or every thing goes wrong afterwards; not a faith that he lived or that he died—not a faith that his doctrines were true, and his life exemplary, but faith in *his blood*. And what are we to believe concerning his blood? Why, we are simply to take the whole passage together, and have faith in his blood for the remission of sins, because God hath set him forth as a propitiation. But we are not to stop here. We may believe precisely as we ought, about the object of the death of Christ, and about the way in which men will be saved, and all the time we may have no prospect of being saved ourselves. The reason is, we must *love* Christ; and when I say *love*, I mean just what is always meant, when speaking of the common intercourse of men. I mean a firm principle of attachment, which

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makes us delight to think of him, and to please him, and to be with him, and to do as he wishes to have us do; and this, too, not at any one time, but at all times. I have no reference to the mere emotions of gratitude, nor to any pleasure we may have in the hope that he will be our final Saviour. Such exercises are by no means the evidences of piety. Before we look at all towards them, we must ascertain whether we have *confided* in Christ, by seeking our pardon and our hopes entirely from him, and by giving up our whole souls to his service, and whether we have any thing of that feeling for him on a large scale, which the warmth of our earthly attachments confers on a small one.

Again: What terms are we keeping with the *world?* All of us know that the Bible has forbidden us to be conformed to it, or to set our affections upon it; and that man who is not sensible from day to day, of a constant struggle against the temptations around him, falls short of the very first evidence of experimental religion. My hearers, there is a sort of visible Christianity which walks along through life upon the boundary line that separates the Church from the world; and to this track it always adheres, because, by stepping a little on one side it enjoys the varieties of life, and by stepping a little on the other side it resumes a standing among the children of God. Of all the forms of self-deception, this is one of the worst—not that I would dictate how far any of us may indulge in what are usually styled rational amusements; nor do I undertake to affirm, that we commit a positive crime by such indulgencies. But this I say, that in the character of a professor of religion, it is a trait which, if I were lying on the death-bed, I should tremble to carry with me to the judgment seat of Christ. No such accommodating Christianity is found in the life of our Saviour, nor of his apostles, nor of his primitive people. They came out from the world, and were separate; and there

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was something about them as well on a week-day as on the Sabbath, to show that their affections were fixed on a better inheritance. Now, it is not the bare fact of indulging in this amusement or the other, that I am alluding to; but when we find out which way the current of the heart *is* set, and when we read the next moment that he who will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God, it is time, high time, that we should examine ourselves before rushing on the awful symbols of the body and blood of Christ.

Again: What are our *ideas of Heaven?* That we hope for it, there is no possible doubt. The worst man upon earth—the most blasphemous and abandoned—if you were to offer him the Indies to swear on the evangelists of God, that he would never ask his Maker for salvation, would recoil from the bargain. There is no question, therefore, that all of us look with pleasure to the prospect of future happiness. But, my brethren, the hope of future happiness is one thing, and the hope of Heaven is quite another thing. We may be gratified by believing that after death we shall escape punishment and pain, but the point is, whether the heart spontaneously pants for that hour, when it shall be free from sin, and free from the burden of itself, and free from the possibility of offending a kind and merciful God. O, it is sweet for a Christian to cast forward the eye of faith to that blessed world, where he will be relieved from this load of guilt, and made perfectly holy, and refreshed with new and progressive disclosures of the Saviour's character, and the Saviour's glory! We need not ask, brethren, what *ought* to be our views, or what *ought* to be our feelings in regard to Heaven—but what are they? The mere escape from suffering is but a small consideration—first of all, we are to inquire, whether our spontaneous breathings are after holiness—whether the rest which we anticipate beyond the grave is precious to us, chiefly be-

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cause it will remove our sinfulness—and whether our greatest solicitude, both for this world and the next, is that we may bear upon us the image and the purity of God. Such are some of the leading criteria by which a man is to examine himself, preparatory to taking his seat at the sacramental table. On the approaching Sabbath, I will not deny that it would give me the purest joy to see you, one and all, come forward and join in the solemnities of Zion; but sooner may my lips freeze together, than encourage you to do so while you know that the work of an experimental preparation is *now*, as it always *has* been, entirely unperformed. So, then, it seems that some of you are not prepared, and why not? *Perhaps* you are not good enough—you are too great a sinner. Yes,—and you will disobey this command of Christ;—this, the most affecting and impressive, because you have already disobeyed so many. You will hold on to your sins, because you are so great a sinner. *Perhaps* you have no heart acceptably to take the communion. Yes—and you will justify the neglect of one duty by pleading the deeper and darker guilt of having neglected another. You will keep within you, a heart which deters you from the eucharist, and which, by the very same rule, will shut you out from the presence of God and of Christ. *Perhaps* you have once had a seat at the Saviour's table, but, by long neglect, have become too guilty, or too indifferent, to take it again. Yes—and go on a few months, or a few years more, and in the same way that your sins have banished you from the communion, will they banish you from Heaven. You are welcome—you are bound to come now, even at the eleventh hour; but remember, the twelfth hour will close the scene in midnight forever.

Men and Brethren: Call upon them as we will—plead with them as we will—there is an alarming majority of this congregation, who have no idea on next Sabbath, more than

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they ever had, of celebrating the death of that Saviour who bled on the Cross for their sins. To them—to each and every one of them, I speak. I speak to all of you, my hearers, and I hope and pray that God may give you no peace, day nor night, till you have found out some adequate excuse for neglecting your duty, or till you come forward while you may, and perform it. There are some of you, however, who will not forget the dying command of Christ, nor absent yourselves from the solemnities of his table. *You*, my Christian friends, we hail with joy, among the little band of communicants. To what denomination you belong is of no importance—we give to all of you, without exception, the hand of a brotherly welcome. The Lord's Supper, like that Heaven which it typifies, merges every distinction of sect in the one great and honorable name of Christian. All we ask, is, that your whole hearts be enlisted in the transaction, that they be not free from sin, but penitent for it—not perfect in holiness, but panting to be so—not good enough to come, but ready enough not to stay away—not absolutely confident of pardon, but trusting in the mercy of Christ alone to dispense it, and cherishing the humble hope, that He has done it already.

May God add His blessing. Amen.

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SERMON XXI.

"Herod the Tetrarch."

Matthew, xiv., 1.

In looking over the biographical sketches of the New Testament, we cannot but mark the honest and impartial accuracy with which they are drawn. Having for their object to keep up a broad line of distinction between virtue and vice, it appears natural that the sacred writers should have regarded themselves as an interested party, and betrayed their sentiments accordingly. But such is not the fact. No matter how fair the field for eulogy—no matter how just the subject for reproach—we find them, in every instance, repressing their personal feelings, and adhering to the fidelity of simple and unvarnished narration. For an example of the remark, take the case of Herod, whose name I have read. Perhaps few men in any age have been more licentious or abandoned; few, certainly, can be cited, who have wrung so many tears of blood from the Church. Yet knowing all this, having it confirmed by profane history, the pen of Inspiration has merely detailed a statement of facts, without indulging a single epithet, without drawing a single inference. Something like a feeling of pity, it is true, appears in the account, but nothing of indignation or censure; not a remark, indeed, is dropped, from which we can gather the views of the evangelist. He leaves it to his readers to form their own conclusions, and hence it is, that we, my hearers, may profit by taking the materials which the Bible affords, and collecting from them the character of a man who figured with almost unparalleled enormity in the early periods of the Church.

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The name of Herod, on the pages of the New Testament, carries along with it a most terrific association. The father, commonly called Herod the Great, was he who massacred the children at Bethlehem, and sought the life of the infant Saviour. The son it was who inhumanly murdered John the Baptist, and he is intended by our text. The nephew, Herod Agrippa, slew St. James, and afterwards imprisoned the venerable Peter with the same design, which, however, was happily prevented. Through the whole family, therefore, we discover a cruelty and savageism, which even in those days of terror mocked at a parallel. The proconsular, or rather the official name of the individual about whom we are now speaking, was Herod Antipas. At the death of his father, he came into power, and was appointed vicegerent of the Roman emperor, with the title of King of Galilee. The first we hear of him in sacred Scripture is as the seducer, and afterwards the husband, of his brother's wife. While living in this incestuous connexion, John the Baptist commenced his career, and Herod from curiosity sent for him to court. The preacher went; but he went not to soothe nor to flatter. He dared to speak the truth; and while the royal sinner was surrounded by the imposing magnificence of empire, he reminded him of his guilt, and called upon him to break off from his destructive course of licentiousness and outrage. To this was returned the laconic answer, which office and rank generally, if they have the power, give to truth. John was ordered to prison. The step is not at all to be wondered at. How many are there, possessed of exalted stations, who do *not* spurn away from them every restraint, which an inferior, and especially a preacher, may wish to impose? Let a class of men be elevated above the common walks of life, by no matter what,—wealth, office, family; and they all at once become enshrouded with a sort of repulsive dignity, which no remonstrance can

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unbend, and no argument approach. John was imprisoned; and if a woman had had her way, he would have been led to the scaffold. When the feebler sex settles down into such a debasement, as to dismiss the sympathies and charities which belong to it, it goes to ten times greater lengths than the other. So in the present case. The degraded wretch, who called herself the wife of Herod, insisted that their prisoner should be put to death. To this, however, her husband, with all his cruelty, would not consent, for one of the strangest reasons in the world,—"because he feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy." Strange, did I say? No, it is not strange; there is a something in the lofty purity of real religion which is always feared, even by the most abandoned. It is precisely the principle which made Felix tremble before Paul, when he heard him reason of righteousness, of temperance, and of a judgment to come. The image of God, see it where we will, is awfully grand and impressive; and often, very often, when the worldling is pointing the finger of scorn at the disciples of Christ, a secret awe is moving in his heart, which compels him to do them reverence. But Herod went beyond the emotion of fear. He visited John in his confinement; and, says the evangelist, "heard him gladly." Indeed, he seems to have commended the honesty of his preaching, and if one particular subject had been avoided, the violation of the marriage covenant, he would probably have felt towards him no resentment. But you may inquire how it happens, that men of Herod's character can listen to the alarming truths of the Gospel with composure? And yet it is so. The ability, the address, the elevation of the preacher, may awaken applause, even where his exhortations are disregarded, and his principles denied. Or there may be in the doctrine itself a something of sublimity which overawes, while the entire groundwork of the plan of salvation by Christ is to the Jew

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a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness. And thus we find, that hundreds will sit under the announcements of Inspiration with the decency of external respect, but the moment the word of God is pressed home upon their own consciences—the moment they find the declaration of the prophet thundering in their ears, "Thou art the man,"—then it is, that they seize upon some gilded apology, and bid the subject of religion farewell. But in Herod's case, it was not all, that he admired the preacher. He commenced the formalities of a visible reformation, and, as we are told, did many things which were required of him. Promising, indeed, was the prospect that such a man should relinquish any of his habits; but Herodias was still retained, and thus every hope of radical amendment was extinguished. Not all the obligations of this world, nor all the solemnities of another, could persuade him to renounce the infamous woman who shared his throne. It was easy for him, as it is for us, to surrender one sin, or another sin for which no very craving propensity called; but to crush at a blow the mighty *principle* of sin in the heart, is another and a very different work. This is accomplished only by that entire devotedness to God which spontaneously abandons every thing, however trivial, which He has forbidden, and performs every thing, however mortifying, which He has enjoined.

But to return to Herod. If any palliation could be offered for his guilt—any semblance of excuse for retaining his degraded queen, it must be found in the strength of that passion which hurried him on in his career. Well, indeed, has Inspiration said of an unprincipled woman—that "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." What is the sacrifice which deluded man will not offer at this polluted shrine? Interest, health, character, the most endearing ties, and the most solemn engagements; all that binds society together; all that makes

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us respect ourselves; and all that holds out to us the hope of final salvation. But even this passion, so deadly in its visitations upon the heart, could not drive its sceptred victim to the crime of murder, for which his wretched wife was so anxious. It was reserved for her to decoy when she could not persuade him to the perpetration. And what think you was the method by which she executed her inhuman design? She waited for the birth-day of her husband, which he was accustomed to distinguish by a splendid celebration. After the courtiers and nobles were assembled and heated with wine, she sent in her daughter to dance before them. Herod, inflamed with drink, was delighted at her performance, and, in a moment of rashness, broke forth into an infatuated oath that he would give her whatever she might ask, even to the half of his kingdom. The child returned to her mother with the tidings, and by her was instructed to ask—not wealth, not power, not a magnificent alliance—but the execution of John the Baptist! Herod himself—even Herod, was struck with horror. Gladly would he have recalled his oath, but he had not firmness enough to reflect that the sin was in making and not in breaking it. Gladly would he have revoked his pledge, but his nobility were around him, and he dared not encounter from them the charge of timidity or inconstancy. They had seen him on the ensanguined field of battle unmoved; they had fought beneath his eagles; and now, that the mere life of an obscure preacher was at stake, could he falsify his word, and that, too, to a female? Could he, in face of the whole court, compromit his honor by so glaring an outrage upon refined and fashionable life? The struggle was hard, but the bloodthirsty character of the gentler man prevailed, as it commonly does, around the table of revelry and dissipation. An executioner was despatched, and, before the company retired from the palace, the dripping head of

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the Baptist attested how well a monarch could keep his word.

From this period Herod seems to have been a miserable man; not that any thing like contrition was discovered in his character, but the recollection of his crime haunted him wherever he went. He felt that he had shed innocent blood, and, amidst all the splendors of royalty, conscience coiled around his wretched soul its lash of a thousand scorpions. He fled to the blandishments of his infamous queen, but they could not soothe him. He resorted, with the true spirit of conscious guilt, to infidelity, but that gave him no repose. Like the fallen angels, he "believed and trembled;" so much so, that when Jesus Christ appeared, soon after his venerable precursor was beheaded, Herod hearing of his sanctity, immediately supposed him to be John the Baptist risen from the dead. All his uneasiness, however, produced no reformation. He followed our Lord's steps like a tiger crouching for his prey. Determined to destroy him, he left nothing undone, till at last the Saviour stood before his bar on trial. As might have been expected, he dismissed at once all the decencies of legal proceedings, and rushed on to the long wished-for catastrophe. He collected his men of war around the prisoner, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and set him at nought, and mocked him, till the closing scene of the drama was finally ushered in, and the heights of Calvary were steeped in the blood of a crucified Messiah.

Because sentence against a wicked work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the children of men are fully set in them to do evil. It *was* so with Herod. But the hour approached for vengeance. The monarch whose daughter he had divorced took the field against him, and after a dreadful battle he was entirely defeated. To add to his distress, the Roman emperor drove him with dis-

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grace from his throne; and, as if Justice were yet unsatisfied, he was subsequently banished to a secluded place in Gaul, where himself and his abandoned queen died in exile, without a tear to bedew their memories in this world—without a hope to cheer them in the expectation of another. They live now only on the roll of infamy, and every page of the historian, sacred or profane, blushes to bear the name of *Herod*.

I am not going to insult you, my hearers, by inquiring if you have characters, even remotely similar, unless in infidelity, to that I have been describing. Let me rather ask you to look at the subject in another light. You see before you one of the enemies of the Church—the great champion of skepticism. You see his end; and is it not the end on which hostility to religion may always calculate? Where is Herod? Where is Nero? Where is Domitian? They survive only in the execrations of posterity. And what, all this time, has become of the Church? Why, she has gone on her way rejoicing. She has blown the clarion of triumph from the centre of the Roman empire to the farthest corner of the earth which human search has explored. The Gospel of Christ has pressed on in its march of glory, trampling under foot the altars of Heathenism, and crumbling the pagodas of Idolatry, and shouting victory even over the minarets of the Arabian prophet. It is true, opposition is raised; but it is also true that opposition must fall. The Church of Christ must and will move forward, for "the Lord her God in the midst of her is mighty." Look at history; look at experience; look at the signs of the times. Must not the Church triumph? I hope in God there are none who doubt it—who disbelieve it. It is too late in the day; but if there are, the armies of Christ will walk over them and leave them in the dust. Search the annals of skepticism, from Herod down to us, and they seem like

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the fragments of some mighty shipwreck. Cast your eyes half that time forward, and our modern skeptics will augment the map of desolation. Christ is taking to himself his great power. The signals are out; the trumpet is sounded; and woe, woe to him, whoever he may be, that throws not off the panoply of resistance to so certain and so glorious a consummation.

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CHAPTER XXII.

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ."

1 *Peter*, i., 1.

It is a very common, and, within its proper application, a very just remark, that Christianity changes the disposition, but not the temper. The meaning is, that the habits—the settled tendencies—or, what is the same thing, the *dispositions* of the mind, are turned by the Gospel into a new direction, while the peculiar excitabilities of the mind—its involuntary and unthinking sallies—or, in other words, its *tempers*, will always adhere to the individual, no matter how deeply Divine grace may have made him the subject of moral renovation. It is on this principle, I presume, that we discover between the saints of the New Testament so plain a difference, at the same time that all of them carry upon their characters the impress of genuine piety. Each man's peculiar temperament gives a cast to his religion: one of warm and lively affections frequently appears precipitate, and another of more calm and sedate feelings, sometimes wears the aspect of languor, inactivity, and sloth. In fact, it is in the walks of Christianity precisely as it is in the ordinary developments of life. The Creator has made us with different peculiarities of mind, which betray themselves upon our conduct wherever we go, and in whatever course of action we engage; and while hundreds may be pressing forward to Heaven with equal certainty and equal zeal, they may all the while carry along with them, each one for himself, a *sui generis* of character, which marks him conspicuously out from every other individual upon the road. In exemplifying these remarks, I know of

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no instance more striking than the life of the apostle Peter. In looking over his biography, we shall find on the one hand a constellation of the most noble qualities. Sanguine in his hopes, bold in his plans, generous in his views, and fearless, not to say impetuous in his movements, he wins our unlimited applause. But, on the other hand, we see these same dispositions leading him often into difficulty,—we detect failings which piety can never palliate, and yet so evidently do they result from the ardent and intrepid temperament of his mind, that Charity drops a tear over the very foibles she is compelled to reprove.

Where this illustrious apostle was born I am unable to say. His place of residence at the period of his coming upon the sacred pages, was Galilee, where he followed the humble pursuit of a fisherman. In the present instance, therefore, as in most others, the Saviour chose the heralds of his mercy, not from the inmates of a court, who might push forward the triumphs of the Gospel with the arm of power, nor from the disciples of philosophy, who might ascribe the success of his cause to the talents embarked in it, but from those obscurer classes of society where "wisdom," if found at all, would be found under the most conclusive evidence of being "not of this world." The first interview of Peter with Jesus Christ is worthy of notice. He had lived a long time in the same neighborhood, without the least curiosity to see him, till at last his brother, unexpectedly becoming a Christian, prevailed upon Peter to accompany him in a visit to the Saviour. The result was successful, and from that moment we find them both enlisted, heart and hand, under the banners of Christianity.

Need I tell you, my hearers, that this little incident is one of the most affecting and impressive character? You see the issue of a single solicitation from a pious friend. And let me ask, if no godly brother or sister, or parent,

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now perhaps sleeping in the dust,—let me ask, has never offered, by advice, by prayers, by tears, to lead you to a Saviour's Cross? Has never pressed upon you with all the urgency of affection, the importance of a preparation for eternity, and wrung in your ears the solemn, it may now be the forgotten alarm, that there is no peace to the wicked? But I have said that Peter, from that moment, became an earnest and thorough-going Christian. Receiving shortly afterwards the appointment of an apostle, he walked abroad among the children of superstition and sin, proclaiming the messages of the Gospel. No hostility could check his ardor—no obstacle arrest his progress. On several occasions, when the other disciples began to yield to a feeling of discouragement, Peter stood forth and rallied their sinking hopes. Once, especially, the concourse of followers whom Christ had collected around him entirely withdrew, and the apostles themselves had secretly formed the same design. But this illustrious man, unmoved by the terrible array of threatened persecution, remained by his deserted Master. "Lord," said he, with his characteristic warmth, "to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe—we are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The same bold and decided fidelity to the Saviour embodied itself in all his conduct: and if at this period he had a fault, other than the common frailties of nature, it was, that impatient at the meek and gradual advance of Christianity, he wished to push it on with a rapidity proportioned to its real claims, and a violence corresponding with that employed in opposing it. He seemed desirous, few and feeble as were the littte band of Christians, to lead them at once against their bloodthirsty enemies. And if the Messiah had resorted to the sword in establishing his religion, there can be little doubt but Peter would have kept the field at every hazard, till he was a

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corpse or a conqueror. By this warm though blinded attachment to Jesus Christ, the apostle became unusually endeared to him, so much so as to draw from his lips that celebrated, perhaps difficult, expression in Matthew, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church." Of this passage there is no time to decide, at present, the precise import. You all know that it is by many supposed to have given to Peter a supremacy over the other apostles, which, we are told, has descended, of right, to his legitimate successors. That such is not the meaning of the words, I should be wanting to my subject not to offer you a few brief reasons. In the first place, Peter never claimed and never exercised the least authority. In the second, St. Paul declared himself nothing inferior to the very chiefest apostles. In the third, no one ever pretended to be Peter's successor till nearly three hundred years after his death. In the fourth, St. Peter might very justly be called the rock on which the Church was built, for he was the man who established the first Christian Church among the Jews, and the first Christian Church among the Gentiles. In the last place, Christ says to Peter, "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose shall be loosed, and whatever thou shalt bind shall be bound." But a little farther along, he says the very same words to all the apostles together; so that whether the expression mean little or much, it has nothing in it peculiar to Peter.

But, waiving this question, we have now arrived at a period in the apostle's life, which, if his own tears, or the tears of the Church, could recal it, would never have remained on the annals of Christianity. Were it possible for repentance to annihilate the deed over which it mourns, the Scripture writers would have passed in silence the melancholy scene which is now coming up—and surely, it furnishes a distinguished evidence of their impartiality, that they have

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not done so, and thus sheltered the name of a Christian apostle from a most foul and disgraceful imputation. Can you believe, my hearers, that St. Peter—the lofty, the undaunted leader of his brethren—could have sunk so low as to deny his Master? Alas, it was even so; and God sometimes permits the most high and towering spirits to fall from their virtuous elevation, as if to teach us that human nature, even when decked with its brightest accomplishments, *is* human, and is sinful. The story, as we have it in the New Testament, is told with all the simplicity and all the ingenuousness of truth. When Jesus Christ celebrated the last Passover, Peter, with the other apostles, was present. Our Lord, after conversing with him for some minutes, expressed a fear, that his fidelity might give way in the hour of trial. Peter, in the warmth of his feelings, declared, that he stood ready to lay down his life for his Master. The Saviour proceeded to say, that before the next morning, he would not only prove unfaithful, but would disavow all acquaintance with him. The same tremendous prediction was repeated as they went out together to the garden of Gethsemane; but Peter, hurt at the suspicion, and confident of his own sincerity, renewed his declaration, that he would meet death in any form, rather than deny his Master. For some time he kept his word. When a band of soldiers approached to seize Christ, Peter drew his sword: attacked them single-handed, with his accustomed impetuosity; and had he been permitted, we may safely presume, he would have repelled them, or perished in the attempt. But when Jesus Christ stopped the shedding of blood—when he consented to be taken bound, and led away a prisoner—when he quietly submitted to all this, Peter, with the rest, forsook him and fled. I have often, my hearers, reflected upon his conduct, with the wish to ascertain the real motive from which it sprung. It could not have been fear—for

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he knew it not; he was even *too* fearless. It could not have been want of affection—for his whole previous deportment disproved the charge and besides, even after deserting Christ, he followed him afar off, watching with trembling solicitude the result. No;—in my opinion, the great secret was, that Peter had courage enough, but no fortitude. He could meet danger, but he could not bear pain, indignity and disgrace. When the Saviour ordered him to lay aside his sword, he probably thought that his services were of no further use, and that to remain where he was, was only insuring his own destruction without aiding his Master. Hence he followed at a distance, to the place of trial, where, actuated by the same selfish feelings, and discouraged by the mild and unresisting submission of Christ, he, three times in succession, denied that he knew Him. The third time, however, as the words were passing his lips, the Lord Jesus turned, and looked upon him. Peter remembered his prediction—he sunk to the earth—the whole enormity of his guilt rushed in an instant upon him, and in the impressive language of Inspiration, "He went out and wept bitterly. "And yet," you will perhaps exclaim, "this man who denied his Lord, is called a saint, while hundreds, who testify at any rate a decent respect for the Saviour, are pronounced impenitent and unbelieving." Well, my hearers, would you like to know the difference between the cases? It is this: Piety may sometimes be wrong, but impenitence is never right. A child of God may woefully *fall:* but a child of the world has nothing *from which* to fall. Or, if you wish the sentiments in another garb: a temperate man may become intoxicated, but an habitual drunkard is never sober. Here then is Peter, on whose character rests the stigma of one fearful and unpalliated sin; but remember, that the rest of his whole life, both before and after the catastrophe, was devoted to the unwea-

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ried service of God. In an hour of temptation and trial, he fell; but when his Lord looked upon him, "He went out and wept bitterly." He shed over the turpitude of his crime the tears of an abasing repentance—of an unsoftened and heart-rending remorse; and what was the consequence? His contrition restored him to the favor he had lost. When the Redeemer had risen from the dead, Peter was the first apostle to whom he appeared, bringing with him a supply of much needed consolation; and the apostle himself, as if to atone more deeply for his guilt, reviewed the Gospel of St. Mark, and inserted in it the history of his own crime, in terms of a more glowing reproach than we find in any other evangelist.

I shall defer to another Sabbath, the conclusion of the subject which has now been begun. From this point, the life of the venerable Peter is no longer chequered with failings and virtues. It becomes one steady course of active Christianity, shining like the path of the just, more and more, to the perfect day. There is a remark, however, arising from what has been already said, which, to a reflecting spectator of life, will not be unimportant. Almost every man we meet has some peculiar and unfortunate propensity of which temptation is sure to take advantage. There is in our breasts some predominating passion; it is stated in Scripture our besetting sin. The world, if they perceive it, call it our weak side; but whatever be the name, it holds over us a powerful dominion. Through this channel, it seems to have been that St. Peter's apostacy was brought on. His ruling foible was an impetuous and presumptuous reliance upon himself, and when he found that the Saviour needed none of his aid, he lost all confidence in the success of the cause, and denied his mild and unassuming Master. So will it be with us, if we throw the reins upon the neck of our favorite propensities. Not only

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shall we incur the reproach of the world, who detect our failings, but we shall be exposed like Peter, to do, in a single hour of rashness, what years of penitence cannot undo nor recal. It becomes us, therefore, in placing guards around ourselves to secure us from sin, to discover, first of all, whether we have not some unhappy liabilities of character, which, like weak points in the intrenchments of a citadel, may admit the incursions of an enemy, while the rudeness of a general assault would prove entirely useless and unavailing.

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SERMON XXIII.

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ."

1 *Peter*, i., 1.

About the distinguished apostle whose name is mentioned in our text, we have already, on the last Sabbath, offered some reflections. We left him overwhelmed with repentance and remorse for the crime of denying his Lord; and it is pleasing to know, that his professions at that awful moment were followed up by those genuine and lasting fruits which vital piety never fails to produce. From this period, he is Peter again, in all the fidelity of his attachments, and all the ardor of his devotedness to Christ. Shortly subsequent to our Saviour's resurrection, the apostle was employed on that celebrated occasion usually styled "the Day of Pentecost." His preaching made a deep impression on the minds of the audience; three thousand persons are said to have been affected, not to excitement alone—not alone to the sympathies of animal feeling,—but to an evangelical renovation, and a saving knowledge of Christ. It was, my hearers, what is called in modern language a revival of religion—a season, we are often told, of enthusiasm; and undoubtedly, enthusiasm and excess do sometimes mingle with it, but the result, *upon the whole*, is always salutary and glorious. Why need we suppose an unusual anxiety for the concerns of the soul to be engrafted upon enthusiasm alone? If the Bible be true at all, it is most solemnly true; and for sinners, impenitent and unawakened sinners, to be roused never so suddenly to a sense of their danger, implies no more enthusiasm than it would for a man upon the brink of a breaking precipice to cry for help; or for another, while

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his dwelling was wrapt in flames, to call for a rescue from the devouring element.

But to return. Shortly after the day of Pentecost, St. Peter appears again in a most interesting light. In a laudable conformity to national usage, he had gone with the apostle John to the temple at the hour of prayer. While there, a poor man, who had been a cripple from his birth, solicited his relief. The answer which Peter returned is a fair specimen of his noble character, "Silver and gold have I none," said he, "but such as I have give I thee—in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk." This reply suggests to us two important thoughts: the first, that the heralds of Christ are to relieve the temporal, as well as the spiritual wants of mankind; and the second, that while our Saviour invariably wrought miracles by his own powers, the apostles in every instance did it in his name, and by his authority. The cripple, however, was cured; and such was the publicity of the case, that crowds of people flocked together to witness the phenomenon. But Peter sought no applause. As soon as a large assembly had convened, he opened upon them one of his most powerful exhortations. He told them the truth, like a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. He informed them that, say what they might, they had but one alternative—either to repent, and believe on the crucified Son of God, or to be lost forever. Such doctrines, you can easily presume, gained him no favor; and after being arraigned before the Sanhedrim, he was thrown into prison. Here he was visited, threatened, flattered, to induce in him the surrender of his principles. But seduction, on the one hand, and menace on the other, answered no purpose. He remained inflexible, till at last the government, tired of their constant attrition upon a rock, dismissed him, and the apostle walked once more forth with fresh vigor to the high and holy work of publishing through the

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empire of Heathenism the news of life and immortality brought to light in the Gospel. For a long time he was left unmolested; and allow me, my hearers, to believe that the disciples of Christ would never have been persecuted, but for the prodigious power and success attending their preaching. Why *should* they have been? The Roman government tolerated every other religion, except the Christian. On such subjects, they were not merely indulgent; they were indifferent. The Egyptian, the Persian, the Greek, the Jew, all might go to the very capitol of the empire, and preach and proselyte if they could, and nothing like hostility was thought of. But when Christianity appeared, ridiculed as it was, it swept all before it; and if any thing can goad impetuous man to a perfect frenzy, it is to see a competitor, whom he has despised, taking the ground of an unbending and successful opposition to him. So it was with the enemies of Christ: so it was with the enemies of Peter. The moment his preaching began to have effect, he was again seized by the Sanhedrim, and a proposition was laid before them to put him to death. It did not pass, indeed, but it came within a very little of passing; for we are told that Peter was scourged before they released him from confinement. This is an interesting point, and I beg you to look at it with attention. You find in the New Testament a frequent mention of scourging: our Saviour was scourged when Pilate wished to let him go; and Peter, in the present case, suffered the same fate; and what, think you, was the reason? Why, when a Christian was arraigned, the court dared not acquit him, for fear of the infatuated and shouting populace; and the method of proceeding was, to scourge the helpless prisoner till his body was covered with bruises and blood, and then to send him out into the crowd, to melt them into pity by this mangled and dripping spectacle of horror! All this, and more than this, St. Peter suffered unmoved.

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He preached on: he prayed on. Firm and collected he stood by the cause of his Master, like—what can I say more, than like himself, recovered from his former dereliction.

But Herod still lived, and therefore there was every thing to fear. The tyrant began his desolating career by putting St. James to death; and almost before his blood was cold, he seized Peter, and condemned him to the same fate. No wonder, that in so awful an hour the Church should cry mightily unto God. The little band of Christians assembled, and laid their case, not before the court of Herod, but the throne of the Almighty. And they were heard: God was in Heaven, and Peter was released. The very night before the appointed day of execution, he passed unhurt through the line of sentinels; and what think you? He went to the house of a friend for concealment, where he found a prayer-meeting convened, and imploring God to save him from the scaffold which he had just escaped. O, let a man make a mock of prayer, and he is not a blasphemer merely, but a fool! He is below the contempt of this world, and beyond the hope of another. Surely, if there be a God, He must love holiness; and if so, He must hear the prayer of holiness; or, I might rather say, that the whole design of His government evidently is to give to holiness His protection and His favor. And since He employs different means in accomplishing His ends, why should not prayer be one of the means by which He brings about the rescue and the triumph of holiness, sometimes in this world, and always in the next. I challenge the pride of reason, or the evasions of philosophy, to dispute the doctrine.

Thus, in the present instance, the great Head of the Church had a work for Peter to do, and done it was. The apostle toiled through the obstacles and discouragements around him till his three-score years and ten were measured, when he was translated to a better and brighter world. The

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inhuman Nero seized the venerable old man, and in spite of his age, his infirmities, his innocence, condemned him to death. He was led out, pinioned to the ground, and even the multitude who had assembled to insult him were moved to pity as he passed along. Just before the execution commenced, the decrepid and tottering prisoner requested that he might be nailed to the stake with his head downwards, for having once denied his Master. The request was granted, and in this manner St. Peter expired.

Now, my hearers, I beg you, first of all, in view of the subject we have discussed, to remark how important the exertions of a single man may become in the machinery of human events. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; and the instrumentalities which He employs in bringing about the most splendid results are frequently such as we should distrust, if not despise. For example: The wife of an obscure English shop-keeper had a son, who, at his birth, was apparently dead, and they prepared to bury him. One of the servants, however, discovered signs of life, and he was raised to manhood. That was the celebrated Doddridge. John Newton, too, once picked up a wandering child in the streets of London, and gave him his education. That was the far-famed and immortal Buchanan. In the present case, also, St. Peter was an obscure fisherman, born in indigence and bred in seclusion, till, by an accidental visit to Christ, with his brother, he became the rock on which the Church was built.

I wish you to remark again, that the foibles and infirmities of human nature appear sometimes to be engrafted on its very virtues. The apostle Peter stood unmoved by the side of his Master whenever danger was to be met, or hostility resisted; but the moment he was checked in his impetuous career, and commanded tamely to submit, he lost his confidence in the cause of Christ. Why? Because he

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relied too presumptuously upon himself. He had no idea of success in an enterprise without the use of the sword. I will not say he had too much courage, but he trusted too much in it, and the consequence was that the mild and unresisting submission of the Saviour unarmed and appalled him, when the most terrible array of arms would only have led him on to a more noble intrepidity.

We have another observation suggested by our subject, which is, that natural talents, when consecrated by piety, are turned to as much account in religion as in any thing else. Look into the New Testament. St. Paul was a man of liberal education and fine classical learning. They were not useless when he became a Christian. On the contrary, he made them tell on every page of his writings and every labor of his life. Peter, though not educated, was gifted with a mind uncommonly vigorous and efficient; and, accordingly, the whole drift of his epistles is to press upon us the urgencies of the Gospel in their most strong and striking light. Each of the apostles, in short, possessed his own peculiar qualifications, conferred not by inspiration, but by nature, which the Holy Spirit subsidized into the service of Christianity. Although, therefore, God can give success to the feeblest instruments of His will, we see him sometimes making use of those endowments by which one man is distinguished from another, as if human wisdom were absolutely necessary to help forward the plans of His government.

But a consideration still more impressive, taken from our subject, is the renovating influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What was it which sent the obscure and uneducated Peter into the ministry, with a heart yearning for the salvation of souls? It was the Gospel. What sustained him under trials the most severe and obstacles the most discouraging, during a sixty years' apostleship? It was the

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Gospel. What led him in triumph to the stake, and raised from his quivering lips, in the moment of exchanging worlds, the shout of victory? My hearers, it was the Gospel of Jesus. It is foolish—it is stupid, to account for these things on any other principle. And is there nothing in such a Gospel which you will need, to hold you up in the afflictions of life, and go with you to the solemnities of a dying hour? Will you continue to put away from you the overtures of that Saviour who has bled upon the cross for your sins, and offered you a *hope* in his blood, without money and without price? I point you to the world, with all its allurements, and follies, and pleasures; I lead you to the enticements of wealth—the splendors of fashion—the revelries of mirth; but look one moment to the bar of God; cast one glance forward to the judgment-seat, and then listen to the solemn question which the venerable Peter has left for each of us to answer: "Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." Amen.

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SERMON XXIV.

"And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

Acts, xxvi., 29.

SUCH was the language of a man loaded with chains, covered with reproach, and on trial for his life before a Roman court of justice. After concluding a most able and eloquent defence, one of the judges, subdued by the power of argument, exclaimed to him, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." The answer of the apostle you have just heard. It is replete with the greatness and philanthropy of his mind. If sublimity be ever found in morals, it surely is when we see an individual emaciated by long imprisonment, and bending under the weight of his fetters; when we hear him, unmoved by the appalling preparations around him, reply to the hesitating "*almost*" of his judge—"I wish, indeed, you *were* a Christian. Would to God that all of you were such as I am, except these bonds—that you enjoyed the hopes and consolations of Christianity, without any of the sufferings to which, by my attachment to it, I am myself subjected." Where, my hearers, was a sentiment ever uttered which breathed a feeling of purer or of loftier magnanimity?

Before inquiring, as we soon shall, what it is to be such as St. Paul was, or, in other words, what was really the character of the man, it is proper to glance at some of the leading events of his life. He was born, as he tells us himself, in Tarsus, a sea-port of the Mediterranean. His parents were rich, respectable, and, in the Jewish way,

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strictly religious. After acquiring a knowledge of Latin and Greek literature in his native place, he was sent to Jerusalem, where he entered a school of great celebrity, to complete his education by prosecuting the study of the law. His proficiency here was so great, although under the disadvantage of feeble health, that he was elected, even while a student, to a seat in the Sanhedrim. From this period, actuated, no doubt, by the most sincere motives, he drew the sword against Christianity, and seemed to think it his public duty to throw away the scabbard. All the ingenuity of his mind, all the zeal of his feelings, and all the energy of his character, were rallied to a single point—the extermination of the Christians. He hunted them like a famished tiger; he forced them from their concealment, and drove them to prison. He burst open their dwellings in the dead of night; he stretched them on the instruments of torture; he presided in triumph and exultation over the distressing ceremonies of their martyrdom. It was while engaged in one of these projects of blood that he suddenly halted in his course, and, to the astonishment of all who knew him, became a Christian.

The account which he gives us of his conversion—that it resulted from being struck down by a sudden light from Heaven, while travelling—is certainly a strange one, and not to be credited, except by admitting the fact to have been miraculous. But, on the other hand, what motive could St. Paul have had for getting up such a story, if it were not true? We cannot suppose it a piece of imposture, for that would be making him act against his interest, against his principles, and against all the feelings of human nature. Nor can we suppose him to have been deceived in the affair. Who was there to deceive him? His associates *would* not have done it, because they wished to retain him among

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themselves; and the Christian party *could* not have done it, because it was a long time afterwards before they would even believe his story; and besides, how could his change originate from those with whom he had had no previous intercourse, and who, had they known him never so well, had no possible means of producing such a deception. But, waiving this point, one thing is certain—that, from the period of his journey to Damascus, St. Paul was a totally different man. He entered heart and hand on the work of helping forward that religion which, till then, he had been so eager to crush. He renounced all his former expectations, and became one of the most active and humble followers of Christ.

From the twenty-fourth year of his age he maintained a steady, unbroken, and vigorous attachment to the service of his crucified Master. His system of life was completely changed. Weeks, months, and years, he devoted unreservedly to the employment of extending the empire of Christianity. He travelled from one end of the world to the other; opposition did not intimidate—obstacles did not retard him. But one object appeared to engross all his thoughts—the kingdom of Christ. To promote this, every earthly consideration under his control was made subservient. Wealth, honor, office, the patronage of friends, health, and, finally, life itself. He was beheaded by Nero, on the charge of having converted one of his debauched favorites to Christianity.

Now, what I wish is, after this imperfect sketch of the apostle's life, to call your attention to his character. And, in the first place, he was a man of talents and education. It is impossible to read his writings with candor, or even with care, without discovering a correct, profound, and comprehensive mind. It is true, he was under the guidance of

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inspiration, but while this shielded him from error, it left him, as it left every other inspired person, with his own peculiarities of style and of thought.

Hence we find St. Paul's course of reasoning different from that of any other New Testament writer. He is more nervous, more forcible; reasoning seems to have been more his object. There is something in all his epistles which show us what his education had been; a purity of language, and a correctness of conception which the slightest glance may discover to have been entirely his own. In many parts, too, he is highly eloquent, particularly where he was called to defend himself in public. Nothing but his talents could have produced the effects which followed his addresses, for he was a man of very ordinary appearance, and had a hesitancy of speech, besides which he always began with the popular prejudice against him. "Much learning," said one of his judges, "doth make thee mad." Much learning the apostle did indeed possess; but it was a very different man who had the madness. Another trait in St. Paul's character is, that he was a gentleman. I do not mean that he could swear a genteel oath, or that he could say a great many things which he did not feel, or that he kept a set of weapons for certain honorable occasions. I mean, that his deportment to all classes of society was becoming and dignified, that he treated his superiors with respect, and his inferiors with kindness, and his equals with sincerity, frankness, and friendship,—and this it is to be a gentleman. Through his whole life, after his conversion, we cannot find a single act which the rules of genuine politeness would condemn, except that once he addressed the high priest without giving him his titles: but he tells us he did not know the high priest, as he was not in his robes; and immediately on being informed, gave him his customary titles. It is often interesting to see how the apostle, in his

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intercourse with individuals—especially the magistrates—could have told them the truth so plainly, and pressed it so directly on their consciences, without being, in some sense, disrespectful. But not an instance can be named, whatever be his plainness, or his pungency, in which he deviates from the strictest laws of decorum. One of his own precepts to all the followers of Christ, is *to be courteous;* and certainly, if any other authority were needed, they may plead the uniform tenor of his example.

Again: St. Paul's character was distinguished by an uncommon share of energy and vigor. I mean here the very thing which some others would probably call *enthusiasm.* The fact is, there are certain qualities of mind which go by one name in religion; and, in any other pursuit, the same qualities go by a very different name. A man, in getting rich, may endure labor, exposure, fatigue, and cross the ocean on a plank, if possible,—and this is enterprise; or he may be thorough in all his business, and prompt and decided in his opinions, and move forward in his own path, regardless of opposition,—and this is energy. But the moment he begins to do any thing in earnest in religion—the moment he seems to regard the salvation of the soul as a matter of pressing importance—the moment he takes his ground as a Christian, and refuses to move from it,—then it is enthusiasm. Let me ask, if St. Paul had done for the Roman empire what he did for Christianity, would not his name have lived to this day in columns of marble? Or even if, for any object of personal ambition, he had developed his astonishing powers of action, should we not have put him down on the list of unparallelled efficiency and vigor? What, then, is the secret charm which blots from the reputation of the Christian those virtues which adorn the reputation of the man? Take the map,—trace the route of his travels—count the churches he formed, and the

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converts he made—compute the arithmetic of what this one debilitated and unpatronised individual accomplished, and then say, whatever you may think of the nature of his undertaking, if he did not bring to bear upon it some of the most resistless energy that ever was evinced in human exertion.

But the principal characteristic of St. Paul, and one contemplated more than any other by the text, is, that he was a serious, thorough Christian. Before his conversion, he appears to have been a moderate man of the world, unexceptionably moral, and punctual in all the external duties of religion, but ignorant of himself and of his God. His talents rendered him self-confident—his connexions in life made him proud—and his integrity and honorable feelings gave him an unsuspicious reliance on his own good works. But afterwards, how changed! What were his sentiments? "I am the chief of sinners," "the least of all saints,"—"I am polluted and vile,"—"O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!" What were his feelings? "To me to live is Christ,"—"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for him; yea, doubtless, and I count all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." What was his life? It was a life of prayer, and of piety: it was a constant scene of communion with his Saviour. In his closet, and on his knees, he wrestled with the Angel of the Covenant: he poured out his heart unto God, and unbosomed before Him all his sorrows, and confessed and deplored his sins. In the world he breathed the spirit which he caught from retirement. It animated all his intercourse with mankind. It prompted that activity of Christian benevolence for which thousands are rejoicing now in Heaven, and thousands are grateful on earth. And is this the celebrated Saul of Tarsus—the high-minded Pharisee—the

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student of Gamaliel—the member of the Sanhedrim,—that has learned to take and to keep his place in the dust and at the feet of Christ?

Ah, my brethren, if we would ever possess the spirit which he possessed, or the Heaven he now inhabits, we, too, must learn to sit down in the dust at the feet of the Saviour. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, and the fashion of this world passeth away. We may bring to the Cross of Calvary the talents and the accomplishments which grace us in the intercourse of life, but we must surrender our whole hearts to the direction of Christ, if we would have him call us his. We must be Christians in earnest, or we are no Christians at all. Divested of every relic of self-righteousness, and abandoning all our sins, without reserve, we must come to the same common fountain, where, and where alone, we can wash, and be clean. We must live by faith, and by devout and earnest prayer. We must escape from our captivity to the opinions of the world, from our love of its pleasures, and our fear of its ridicule and its frowns, and commence a course of serious, personal, and experimental religion. In this way, and only in this way, shall we put ourselves on the road to Heaven. The spirit which humbled St. Paul must humble us; and the spirit which warmed his heart must warm ours; and the same mercy which saved him—which whispers peace to the sobs of a sincere and lasting repentance,—the same mercy must save us, if indeed we are saved at all. "Would to God," said the apostle, "that you were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

Why is it, my hearers, for the fact is undoubted, that primitive Christians were so much more eminent for piety than those of modern times? We find in the text, and throughout the Bible, that then a profession of Christianity was frequently attended with chains, imprisonment, and death. Yet, cer-

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tain it is, that the duty was discharged more promptly, and followed up by more holiness of life, than has ever been known since. To us the name of Christian brings no danger—no disgrace. To the exposures, the scourgings, the confinements, the martyrdom, which St. Paul suffered, we are not exposed. In one respect, at least, his wish to the Roman judges is fulfilled to ourselves: we are not "*loaded with his bonds.*" But, except his bonds, leave them out of the question, and permit me to ask, if you have no anxiety to be almost and altogether such as he was?—to share the consolations which cheered and animated him—to have a good hope, through grace, of salvation—to expend your lives in the service of Jesus Christ—and, finally, to lie down in the dust with the assurance of a blessed immortality beyond it? Where is the man who would not willingly lay off, I care not what character he may now sustain, for the honor of being as active, as warm-hearted, and as useful a Christian, as was St. Paul? Especially where is he, who, in the agonies of a dying hour, would not like to breathe the triumphant language of the apostle, "I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day."

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SERMON XXV.

"Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more."
Romans, vi., 9.

You are probably aware, my hearers, that this particular Sabbath of the year is kept by many as the anniversary of our Saviour's resurrection. From what quarter, the obligation, or even the expediency, of this festival is derived, some of us, perhaps, may think it hard to discover—certain, however, we are, that the event which is meant to be commemorated, is one of the very last importance, both as an evidence and as a doctrine of our religion. To-day then, chiefly because the celebration of other churches calls the subject to mind, we shall examine the matter of fact laid down by the apostle in our text, "*That Jesus Christ was actually raised from the dead.*"

Before we commence the discussion, it may be proper to understand what use we are to make of the New Testament as we go along. To appeal to it for testimony, would be to beg the question—to throw it entirely away from us, would be unfair, for every candid man will admit that it claims our credit as much as any other history, when speaking merely of plain events which occurred at the time it was written. Let us, therefore, place the New Testament on a footing with Josephus, or Plutarch, or Pliny. In discussing the question of a miracle, it shall not be admitted; but there certainly is no reason to doubt—indeed, I know not that it ever *has* been doubted, that such a personage as Christ once lived, and that he was executed; and that the men, called apostles, wrote his biography; and that they recorded many events which did really happen, and were

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never denied; and that they asserted, *whether truly or not*, that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead. Upon such topics, I presume, no skepticism will deny the authority of the New Testament, nor, indeed, of any other decent and sober history of those times; for the point is simply this, that the apostles *declared*, while they were alive, that the resurrection actually did take place.

After settling these preliminaries, I lay down the simple position, that the New Testament writers, who have told us that Christ was raised from the dead, must either have been deceived themselves, or that they must have deceived others, or that they must have spoken the truth. We inquire, then, in the first place,—*Could they possibly have been deceived themselves?* When Christ was executed—as all admit he was—something, no matter what, was done with the body. The third day after his death, his disciples openly reported the story of the resurrection. This we know without consulting the New Testament. The Jews themselves confessed, that the story was spread at *that time*, because at *that time* they contradicted it. Now, if a rumor was circulated that Christ had risen, why did not his enemies produce the body? On the contrary, they did not pretend to produce it. They did not pretend to possess it. But what did they say to counteract the report? Why, that the disciples had stolen the body. Be it so. Suppose, for the present, the disciples *did* steal it; all I am now proving is, that they were not deceived themselves, and certainly they could not have been, if they had deliberately stolen the body; that would be deceiving others; but it makes it impossible that they could have been *themselves* deceived.

Again: Within a short time after this pretended resurrection, the disciples spread another report, that Christ had appeared to them. And what then? Their imaginations were probably warm, and their passions excited, and here

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they might easily have been deceived. But listen to this report, my brethren, in detail, from their own lips. They declared, that they saw him, not only separately, but when several were together—not only at a great distance from them, but as near as possible—not once only, but at eight different times, by day as well as by night—that they touched him, ate with him, conversed with him, and examined his person, for fear of mistake; and who did all this? Why, not a few scattered enthusiasts, but multitudes. At one time, no less than five hundred individuals. Such was the report. We may, perhaps, conceive, that the whole pretension was a fraud, practised for mercenary or selfish purposes; and I do not at present say, that it was not a fraud; the point I wish to establish is, that the men themselves were not deceived. It is entirely impossible to suppose, that five hundred persons, or even fifty persons, standing together, should all at once imagine the appearance, the conversation, the every thing of a dead acquaintance. That they might agree to publish a falsehood of that nature is not now denied; but, certainly, they could not have been deceived.

Again: All the strong points upon which the truth of the resurrection depends were matters of fact. Now, I can easily suppose the early followers of Christ to have been deceived in their *opinions*. They might have thought him a Saviour, and, under this impression, might have gone fearless to the stake, or the scaffold, and all the time they might have been in an error. But on a question of fact, the chance of being deceived is almost nothing; and hence, we see the weight of an honest man's oath in courts of justice, and, particularly where several unite in the same testimony, the evidence is irresistible. Very much of this sort was the case of the primitive witnesses of Christianity. They had for the most part been acquainted with Christ in

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his life-time—they had seen him executed—they had found that the body was unaccountably missing from the sepulchre—and in no fewer than eight separate instances, had they seen him afterwards; and they come forward and unanimously testify to the same thing. They might have spoken falsely. They might have wished to blindfold others by a common perjury: but one thing is almost demonstrably certain, that they could not have been self deceived. We should cut up every principle of evidence by the roots to suppose it. In a long series of matters of fact, it is inconceivable that any *ten* men—I had almost said any *one* man—should be radically mistaken. Let us, therefore, inquire what has been proved. It is this, that the account of the resurrection is not the offspring of a deluded enthusiasm—that it is either true, or that the New Testament writers knew that it was not true when they gave it circulation.

This last supposition is now to be examined. It constitutes the second head of discourse, viz: whether the apostles could possibly have deceived others, even had they wished it. There is, indeed, a strong presumption that they did not wish it—that they were in the main good and honest men; and no one who reads their history, will suspect them to have been other than this; but let us suppose them to have been bad—to have been ready for the grossest imposture and villany,—still, I say, they could not possibly have accomplished their object. Among other inducements for the opinion, their situation in life would have opposed an insurmountable obstacle. It is granted on all hands, that they were men of obscurity and indigence. They carried nothing about them imposing; nothing like power, eloquence, or splendor; collected confessedly from the lower classes of society, they had no one appendage calculated to push forward their attempt.

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Is it likely—is it conceivable, that such men, arraigned and cross-examined before the most skilful courts of the Augustan age, should have hit upon so refined a system of imposture, as to win over a part of their judges and silence the rest? Would not a detection have somewhere leaked out, when all the ingenuity and all the power of a great Roman province were put in motion to obtain it? Would these illiterate individuals have published a false account of the resurrection, when it gained them nothing—no fame, no riches, no office, no glory; when it exposed them to every thing painful in suffering, and mortifying in contempt? Surely bad men, however abandoned, do not act without motive. They do not court the rack, the wheel, or the gibbet, without any earthly end to be answered by it. But here are hundreds who proclaim a story bottomed on the most palpable perjury; who persist in it at the sacrifice of all that is dear; who devote their whole lives to the propagation of a falsehood which does them no good; and finally expire under the hands of the executioner, with their last breath sending that very falsehood up before them to the tribunal of the Omnipotent God! Where is the man, with the least glimmering of his senses left him, who can for a moment hesitate over such a supposition as this?

Again: The disciples, three days after the death of Christ, reported the story of his resurrection. Before he died, he had predicted some such thing, and therefore a strong guard of soldiers had been stationed around his tomb. But in spite of guards and every other precaution, the body was missing on the third day. Now, my hearers, I do not get this information from the New Testament. You need not believe a word of the New Testament on the subject. The Jews themselves admitted that the body was not to be found. When, therefore, the disciples declared that Christ had risen, why did not some one produce the body to con-

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tradict the report? Because it was missing. And how came it missing? Why, according to the oath of the guard, the disciples had stolen it away while they slept. But is it conceivable that a whole company of Roman soldiers, at a time of so much excitement, and in defiance of the penalty of death, should all at once have been asleep on their posts? And if they *were* asleep, how came they to know that the disciples had stolen the body away? Again, therefore, we ask, why the body was not produced, to contradict the story of its resurrection? Had this been done, the whole thing would have been put to rest. Had the body been exhibited, the apostles could not have deceived men with the pretension that it had risen. Either it was stolen, which we cannot conceive possible, or it was raised, as they said; for otherwise they could no more have convinced the people of the resurrection, than they could that there was no sun in the heavens at mid-day. I repeat, therefore, that if the body of Christ had not unaccountably disappeared, it would have been an absolute impossibility for the apostles to deceive, as, on skeptical principles, they must have deceived, the people around them.

Again: Suppose, my hearers, an assemblage of five to six hundred men, collected from every class of society, and all, in the first place, Jews. They publish to the world in detail an account of the reputed resurrection of an executed criminal. They have no possible object to promote by proclaiming, but every thing to gain by withholding, the story. They testify, not about probabilities, or distant events, or events related by others, but about real facts, which they saw with their own eyes. They are summoned before the most accomplished judges of the age—Jews, and Heathen philosophers, and rabbis. They depose the same thing in every case, so much that not an instance of deviation can be detected in the whole of their examinations. They come

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forward, not in a place remote from the occurrences, but at Jerusalem, in the synagogues, in the pretorium. They give in their testimony, not years afterwards, but three days afterwards, while the very storm of persecution, which had crushed Christ himself, was lowering, ready to burst upon his friends. They are tried separately, and together; and most of them are led to the gallows or the cross, without retracting a single word of their evidence. Suppose, I say, a case like this, and if you can torture it into a collusion of impostors—into a combination of perjury and fraud, examined by another combination of idiocy and senselessness, I can only tell you, that, in my opinion, you will believe in a miracle a thousand times more mysterious than the miracle of the resurrection.

I have thus endeavored to establish the credibility of that great doctrine, upon which every thing like rational Christianity will be found to hinge. Allow me, my hearers, merely to remind you again, that on this subject there are only three alternatives: either the apostles *must* have been deceived themselves; or, they *must have completely* deceived others; or, *they spoke the truth*. Upon which of these conclusions you will settle down, I leave to every man to decide, who has not bid a last farewell to his reason and his senses.

It is not often, my hearers, that I interfere in public with any of the evidences of Christianity. The candid reason is, I think it too late in the day. The religion of this Book stands on too high ground to require an elaborate defence from the preacher, and a corresponding presumption of doubt in the hearers; for everybody knows that the great majority of unbelievers are entirely ignorant of the subject, and therefore to talk to them by the month together would answer just about the same purpose as not to talk to them at all. One thing, however, we shall do well to recollect. Not

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only does the apostle tell us that Christ was raised from the dead, but he tells us, too, that he dieth no more. The provision for our pardon, and our future welfare, has been made. The great sacrifice has been offered for sin; and to each and every one of us is extended the Divine invitation, "Come and take the waters of life freely." We may cavil; we may doubt; we may deny; but all the evidence we ever *shall* have, we have already. Christ will die no more, and he will rise no more. Not again will he ascend the Cross, for those who choose to reject him now; not again for their impenitence will Calvary be bathed in blood. It has once been finished; once he has bowed his head, and given up the ghost; and, believe as we may, Christianity is on the march, and Christ is on the throne; and the time is coming, whether we will or not, when the most unenviable, and comfortless, and unhappy name in all the dominions of God will be the name of *Infidel!*

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SERMON XXVI.

"Above all things, my brethren, swear not."
James, v., 12.

THE air of formality and importance in which this prohibition is habited by the apostle, is apt at first sight to awaken a feeling of surprise. Had he merely denounced profaneness in general terms, his language would have furnished its own explanation; but to forbid, *above all things*, a practice which, though plainly improper, does yet by no means carry along with it the enormity chargeable on many others, is a matter of some astonishment. Now, my hearers, if we look at the case in its true bearings, perhaps the subject will come down upon us with far greater solemnity than we have hitherto imagined. St. James, who wrote this epistle, appears to suppose, and with much justice, that those whom he addressed were all cherishing, on one ground or another, the hope of salvation. To destroy their self-confidence, almost without seeming to do so, was, as far as we can judge, the main drift of his letter. He enumerates several things: inoperative faith; unbelieving works; a spirit of contention; neglect of prayer; pride of wealth,—as being either of them a decisive evidence of unregeneracy. But aware that upon these topics there was room for deception—aware that an individual may easily escape from any general charge which points out no single action of his own by name, the apostle goes on to present a still plainer criterion, by which every one, if guilty, might come at once to a conclusion. "Above all things," is his language, "swear not." As if he had said, However you may be deceived in other respects, one thing is certain, that an habitual indulgence in the common sin

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of profaneness furnishes indisputable evidence that you have no evangelical, well-grounded hope of salvation.

Since, therefore, the subject is now before us, let us, aside from every religious view of it, look upon it in some other lights. Confining ourselves to the individual alone, who is accustomed to trifle with the name of God, we may ask what possible motive—what temptation, can be thought of for a practice so directly at war with the whole scope of the Bible. If it were, that any passion pleaded for gratification; if it were, that an animal appetite should pass its wonted bounds, and seek indulgence; if it were, in short, that we aimed at any object, however worthless, or any interest, however remote—then, indeed, it might sometimes find a place upon the catalogue of our infirmities; but, contrary to all this, it seems absolutely without motive, and without end—an unprovoked violation of the law of God. There is, I know, a class of persons, especially those of feeble intellect, who appear to believe that an unusual hardihood in swearing carries along with it the evidence of intrepidity. And there is another class, who evidently aim at the exhibition of wit, and would think a repartee by no means so brisk, nor a story so well told, unless interspersed at every little interval with an oath. And there is another class, more numerous, perhaps, than all the rest together, who have no way of evincing their sincerity, except to call upon God, at convenient distances in their remarks, to damn their souls, or at least the souls of those who happen to fall within the sweep of their conversation. But surely, my hearers, it is too late in the day for mankind to be caught by flourishes so perfectly empty as these; and besides, unfortunately for the swearer, whatever imaginary laurels he may gather from his expertness, he finds himself always and entirely outdone upon the very lowest walks of society. The most debased and abandoned miscreants of every color are commonly the most forward

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to trample on the name of God; and the cells of a penitentiary resound with far more pithy and ingenious oaths than we can hear enlivening the merriment of the table, or larding the salutations of the coffee-house. But, irony aside, the effect which a habit of profaneness inevitably puts forth upon the mind, is, as the apostle says, above all things to be avoided. I do not mean that it implies a deviation from the path of high and honorable deportment; but this I mean, that it insensibly enfeebles our views of the Supreme Being, wears out religious impressions, and throws over the soul a callousness to its future and eternal destinies. Hence, we hear the practice often palliated, by ascribing it to the mere force of custom;—yes, a custom in which the individual hardly knows when he indulges. And who will say, that such an insensibility to habitual sin is not a state of mind deeply to be deplored? My hearers, so far from palliating, it enhances our guilt; and if there be a God on the throne of the universe, He must, and He will, punish with tenfold severity that hardihood of impenitence, which has so long indulged in sin as not even to be conscious of the perpetration.

But look at this subject in another light. What is the *public tendency* of profaneness? Ask the children who surround your firesides, or swarm through your streets; ask your servants and dependents, who dare not do before you what you dare do before Heaven's God; ask each other, from the highest to the lowest classes of community; ask, I say, who invented the vocabulary of oaths and curses, and I will venture to predict that not a single one can be found, who will claim the merit of originality. Each individual received the contagion from others; and certainly a more impressive commentary on the force of public example cannot be conceived. Nor is this the extent of the evil. It has a worse and a wider influence in regard to the great social

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compact under which we live. No one, accustomed at all to inspect the frame of well-regulated society, need be reminded that the obligation of an oath ought to be kept clothed with the utmost sacredness and solemnity. But is this the fact? By no means. Hundreds, especially of the ignorant classes, are in want only of a sufficient stimulus to burn and blister their lips with the most abominable perjury. And why? We need not wonder at it; it is merely adding an aspect of deliberateness to what they had done again and again before, in the common round of conversation. You can easily see, my hearers, that this familiarity with swearing would naturally endanger the sanctions which judicial proceeding attaches to it; and if presumptive considerations be not enough, go and consult the ablest writers of Europe, I care not whether Christian or Infidel, and one and all will lend assent to the opinion that it is profaneness, more than any single cause besides, which effaces the obligation of judicial oaths from the mind. I have myself known individuals stand up in courts of justice, and swear to positive falsehoods, when the same men, having enforced upon them the kissing of a Bible, or a cross, would turn pale, and halt, and tremble, and finally speak the truth; and the reason plainly was, that the simple act of swearing was too common with them to inspire solemnity, while the merest appendage, in itself of no value, clothed the whole transaction with a novelty which produced the effect.

I say not these things as if any of us were in danger, from a habit of profaneness, of losing our veneration for an oath: but this I say, that each of us is putting forth an example which has its sphere of influence. And we are solemnly bound, in whatever relation of life, as parents, as citizens, as men, to abandon a practice which carries with it the silent and imperceptible, but certain consequence of inflicting a serious injury on the public welfare. There is

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still, however, another light in which this subject presents itself,—one more impressive than any that have yet been named. I mean in regard to the positive and repeated prohibitions of the Godhead. Go the rounds of human society, and what a picture meets the eye! In the dominions of Mahometanism, you will see a devout Turk curbing his fondness for wine during life, in obedience to his prophet. In Pagan countries, the Hindoo will forego his ordinary food for weeks together, because the beda or shaster enjoins it. And even among the Indians of our own wilderness, you will find the most painful austerities enforced in the worship of the Great Spirit. But come back to Christendom, and one half, if not more, of the whole population are indulging in a habit of profaneness which the Christian's God has forbidden, and to which not a propensity in human nature furnishes the least palliating incentive or temptation! But is nothing alleged to excuse it? Certainly there is, my hearers; and never, since the days of Adam, has there been a sin for which human ingenuity has not devised an excuse! The swearer tells you that he means no harm: and what does this prove? Why, only that he has forgotten his Creator, and trampled on the duty he owes him, and become so much of a veteran in the practice, as to be insensible to its enormity. Mean what he may, let him lay his hand on the Bible, and ask, if the unchangeable God will hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain? He tells you, again, that he swears only under the excitement of passion or drink. And here, you see, is one sin lugged in to expiate another. How came he under that excitement? As if the native depravity of the heart were not sufficient, it must be goaded on by animal indulgencies. Quite as well, yes, better, might the criminal escape justice by pleading that he too was under influence of rage or intoxication! It is said, again, especially

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by persons entrusted with command, that profaneness is necessary to enforce obedience. The whole secret of this is, that superiors upon sea or land become first accustomed, on any urgent occasion, to evince their earnestness by a volley of oaths, until, at last, they never seem to their men in earnest *without* oaths. Let them fix upon any artificial mark of earnestness, whatever—a sentence in Greek, or an extract from *Propria quæ maribus*—and it will help them quite as much in the command of sailors, soldiers, or workmen, as profaneness now does, if it only be as often and as furiously repeated.

Alas! my hearers, wretched, wretched indeed are such apologies for the profanation of the awful name of God. How you may feel, I cannot say,—the practice has spread so widely among men, that by this time it is rifled of nearly all its seeming enormity; but, for my part, I confess I should shudder at contracting a guilt like this,—so useless to myself, and so insulting to my Maker; and if I did it, I should shudder still more to look forward to that terrific and appalling day, when, for every idle word, the all-seeing God will bring me into judgment!

A single remark more, and I have done: I observed, when I commenced, that the subject brought before us by the text was one of unusual solemnity. The reason is, that every individual, no matter who, addicted to the habit of profaneness, is carrying upon himself the most positive and unequivocal mark of impenitence!

Let me be understood, my hearers, I do not mean that every lingering imperfection in the human heart is to be construed into an evidence of its unregeneracy. So far from it, the New Testament expressly informs us that a variety of sins will lurk in a Christian's bosom even after his conversion. But what are they? They are sins of infirmity. But is profaneness of this class? What constitutional weakness would ever

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tempt a man, if left to himself, without the pestilence of example around him, to swear? They are sins of ignorance. But is profaneness of this class? Hardly can we turn to a page of the Bible, on which it is not in the plainest terms condemned. They are sins of surprise. But is profaneness of this class? Who was ever surprised into a habit, and especially one which not a propensity in human nature is found to crave?

No, my hearers, I might call upon you by your duty to yourselves, to your children, to society, to mankind, to relinquish a practice which good sense disclaims no less than religion prohibits. But, apart from all those things, what I now wish is to tell another very solemn thing: that *to swear*, in the sense of the apostle, is a deliberate violation of the law of God. It never was, and never will be, habitually chargeable on a follower of Christ; and, to endeavor for a moment to reconcile it with the feeblest hope of salvation, would be like supposing an act of open treason in a patriot, or a known and pre-meditated larceny in an honest man!

The rest I leave to your own reflections.

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SERMON XXVII.

"And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."
1 *John*, iii., 19.

It is no wonder, my hearers, that the Gospel should be depicted upon the pages of inspiration under the warm and animating image of light. To us, there is no other language fitted to convey the religion of Christ in the real loveliness of its attributes. We have seen the imposing step with which it has moved through society; we have witnessed the splendid renovations which have everywhere followed its march; we have felt (or it is our own fault if we have not felt), the commanding influence which it wields over the heart, in dislodging the corruptions of sin, and leaving, in their place, the high and holy hopes of immortality; and yet, on some accounts, the metaphor of the text must have been more striking to the primitive Church than it is even to *us*. They had what we have never had, the spectacle, not merely of Christianity itself, but of the gloom which it came to irradiate. Not only did they see the "Sun of Righteousness" as we do, but they saw it "arise," and they beheld the deepening shadows of night upon which it shone, and they watched its first glowing and glittering beams breaking over the surrounding expanse of darkness and desolation. It is not therefore wonderful, that the early Christians, as well as ourselves, and perhaps more intensely, should have felt in all its force the gladdening assurance, that life and immortality were brought to light in the Gospel. But, after all, so far as regards the meaning of the passage I have read to you, we are still short of the mark. There is reference here not so much to Christian-

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ity in the character of a public institution, as to the scheme it has devised, for offering pardon to the sentenced and perishing sinners. This it is to which the language of our text gives the emphatic name of light, and I, for one, am ready to lend my most cordial assent to the propriety of the appellation. I do so, because, when I have travelled myself tired through the writings of Heathen philosophy, much as I see of genius, and eloquence, and learning, I find not the glimpse of well-founded consolation for the *sinner*. I do so, because, look where I will, beyond the pale of Christendom, I meet nothing, unless it be in the ablutions of the Ganges, or the agonies of the funeral pile, or under the dripping wheels of Juggernaut, nothing like a provision for the *sinner*. I do so, because the New Testament tells me, that Jesus Christ has expired on the Cross, and every page of it teems with the offers of pardon, and all this time I feel that I myself am a *sinner*, to be saved, if saved at all, by some such mighty and atoning substitute. These are the reasons that the Gospel is described to us under the similitude of *light*; and surely, we may look upon it in a spiritual sense, as we do upon the sun in a natural—the great fountain of warmth and splendor—sending animation through the works of God, and diffusing without diminishing its glory.

Thus much for the *light* that has "come into the world." I pass on to the main drift of the passage, which is, that men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. To get hold of this language in its true practical import, we had better apply it at once upon a course of familiar illustration, for all of us must see, that the text, instead of imputing our sins to our ignorance, has ascribed our ignorance to our sins; or, in other words, has laid against us the charge of rejecting the truth, merely because it clashes with our impenitence. Suppose, then, we commence the

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illustration with that class of men who bear the name of *Infidels*. In the outset, however, I should like to ask, how it happens to be known that there *are* Infidels? Let Christianity come from what quarter it may, it certainly has done good enough to be treated with respect, and pushed forward in its attempts at a further reformation. Who, then, actuated by pure and honest feelings, would put on the armor of opposition to it, and aim to rob his fellow-creatures of its consolations and hopes, without even the decency of offering the least equivalent or substitute? If such "deeds" be not "evil," then nothing is evil. But I am willing to lay that consideration aside. We all know there *are* Infidels, and we have seen them encircling the Church with their trains laid, and their matches lighted, and clothed in the imposing panoply of war. What then? I put the question, if the most violent of all this hostility has not sprung from the most unworthy impulse? Where was the splendid genius of Voltaire when he sunk into a mere buffoon in assailing religion? Where was the comprehensive sagacity of Bolingbroke when he launched upon the chaotic extravagance of his "Essays?" Where was the strong and athletic mind of Paine, when he consigned himself to the everlasting infamy of writing the "Age of Reason?" Plainly, these men rejected Christianity, not because they *could* not, but because they *dared* not, believe it. They were driven to impiety of principle as a sort of palliation for their impurity of practice, and upon them it is that the sentiment of our text finds its most legitimate application. But move along further into the ranks of skepticism. We every day see, around us, individuals who intrench themselves in a profound opposition to the Bible. But come to get at the truth of the matter, we find them, much as they are informed on the subject, in a state of absolute ignorance about religion. Nine out of ten have taken up their

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infidelity from chance, without a single argument in its favor, and the secret of the whole is, that it gives a wider swing to their indulgencies, and relieves them from the inconsistency of believing one thing and practising another. They love the darkness, merely because their deeds are evil. Well, there is another exemplification of the text, more commonly to be met with than the one we have just left, and that is the rejection, not of Christianity itself, but of all the abasing and experimental doctrines which belong to it.

My hearers, when the question is up about the salvation of our never-dying souls, it is of little consequence what may turn out to be our opinions. The mere circumstance of yielding assent to the Bible on the strength and evidence as we would yield it to any other book, is never going to carry us to Heaven. If we ever reach Heaven, there must be the process of a personal and a thorough preparation, and this is gone through only by plying the doctrines of the New Testament, and bringing them to bear upon the actual state of the affections in the sight of God. Now, when the preacher endeavors to do so—when he presses home the spiritualities of religion—when he begins to move a step towards the conscience, with the intention of disturbing its repose,—then it is, that his hearers throw up a shield of adamant against the attack, and hundreds, who receive the *whole* of Christianity *in general*, put away from them every word of it in *particular*. In vain does he urge the depravity of the heart—the importance of regeneration—the eternity of future punishment. In vain does he offer, as he goes along, the heavy sanction of "Thus saith the Lord," to every word he utters. It is all to no purpose. Some call it the language of mystery, and others the excitement of enthusiasm, and others still find fault with his preaching, for not being practical. Nothing takes effect-

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There remains, among his hearers, just about as much and as obdurate impenitence, as if he were reciting the illusions of a dream, or the fictions of a high-colored romance. And do you ask the explanation of this? Why, it is plain as the sun in the firmament. How are men to believe doctrines which, when admitted, must ring in their ears one unceasing alarm? No, so long as their deeds are evil, they feel it necessary, in self-defence, to shape their course accordingly—to fly from that sight which would show them to themselves, and unclench their death-like grasp on the world, and drive them up at once to the most irksome of all employments—the work of experimental Christianity.

Well, the thing does not stop here. There is another class of persons who not only receive religion, but they receive also the most strict and mortifying doctrines of it; and yet they keep completely away from the point of being real Christians. With all the rigor of their orthodoxy, they live along in the character of unpardoned sinners, and carry around with them, from day to day, the entire consciousness that they are unprepared for eternity. Approach them on the subject of their salvation, and they will tell you that the diversity of their engagements absorbs their time and unfits them for serious concerns—but not an hour do they subtract from their business to give to their souls; or, they will tell you, perhaps, that they are unable to work upon themselves that renovating change required by the Gospel—but never does this self-distrust put them upon an application to the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ. Or, they will tell you, again, that they lament their own inactivity, and wonder that their hearts are so immoveably obdurate; but not a step do they take towards that atoning Cross beneath which their stubbornness may be melted. No; none of this. Ready as they are to acknowledge that salvation is the gift of God, they continue entirely to forget that man is enjoined to work it out with fear and trembling.

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Do you not know, my hearers, that a large portion of the Christian world belong to the very class I am attempting to describe? And what is the reason of it? Why, read over the text, and you will find the reason. I do not mean that their *deeds are evil* in any such sense as to fix upon them the charge of immorality; but this I *do* mean, that whatever flimsy excuses they may devise for their impenitence, the fault is exclusively their own. The single cause of their remaining in darkness is that they love it. They are too closely rivetted to their sins to exchange them for an interest in the Saviour. The truth is, they wish to be happy, but they do *not* wish to be holy; for, if they did, why not surrender their hearts at once to Christ, who stands ready to fill them with all the preciousness of his grace, and all the demonstrations of his glory? No; they will give up one sin, or another sin, but the great principle of sin within them cannot be dislodged. They hold on to it like a drowning man to a strip of plank in his last convulsions—fixing his grasp with redoubled eagerness, at the very moment when he feels, if he feels at all, that it must inevitably go down with him for ever.

And now, my hearers, what I wish is to lay before you the remaining clause of our text, which affirms that the reason of our condemnation is that very choice of darkness rather than light about which we have been speaking. It matters little by whom this choice is made, whether by the rich or the poor—the accomplished or the illiterate; and it matters not much more to what particular aspect of the subject it refers—whether to open skepticism, or to mere general consent—or to what St. Paul calls "being *almost* a Christian." One thing is certain, that by just how much we stop short of *experimental religion*, by just so much will God keep in store for us the lash of a future punishment. I am well aware that apologies may be rallied on our side. We may trust to the light of Nature, or talk

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about honest scruples, or put on the embellishment of an unimpeachable exterior, but to all these things I plead the single offset, that "*what God hath spoken He will do it.*"

Look at the case: Sinners as we are, has not a flood of light been poured upon the road we are travelling to eternity? Has not a Saviour expired in disgrace and agony upon the cross? Have not the arches of Heaven almost audibly rung with the news of an unmerited pardon, without money and without price? Is there *one* excluded from the offer, or has there ever been, on this side the grave, a *single suppliant* banished from the footstool of mercy? I lay the appeal upon every individual in the reach of my voice. Much as you have relied on some favorite set of evasions and excuses, would you not, this hour, become an experimental Christian but for your sins? Answer it in the sight of Heaven—is there any thing that looks like an obstacle, besides the stubbornness of your reluctant and unyieldng heart? And, while you say this, are you not admitting the charge laid against you by the text—of "loving darkness rather than light, because your deeds are evil?" And what is the consequence? Why, if we miss of salvation, it is a business of our own, and the fault will lie entirely with ourselves. I put it to your souls, my hearers, after Calvary has been steeped in blood, after Inspiration has laid its treasure at our feet, after the warnings and entreaties of the Gospel have been pressed upon us from childhood to this hour, and after conscience has added to all the rest its most impressive and affecting confirmation, what excuse can we devise for our impenitence? With what feelings can we lie down upon our dying beds when the glittering pageantry of this world shall have vanished? How can we raise our eyes before the judgment-seat of Christ when we have gone there, beating back, step by step, as we pass along, the arm of his offered salvation?

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SERMON XXVIII.

"We love Him, because He first loved us."
1 *John*, iv., 19.

THIS passage would seem at first sight to import, that a Christian's love to God is the mere exercise of gratitude. If it were so, every thing like evangelical theology is laid at once in ruins. All of us know that gratitude is a feeling of nature alone; it is a tribute which bad men, as well as good men, pay to the evidence of kindness in a benefactor. It may be awakened, as upon any other subject, so on that of religion; and hundreds there are, who in hearing that Christ for their sakes underwent a painful and humiliating death, will find their eyes to fill, and their hearts to melt, at the story of his generous humanity, and all the time remain just as far away from the point of being real Christians as they were before. Gratitude, therefore, does not constitute that love to God which our text had in view. There is somewhere another meaning to the words, and I take it to be simply this: that mankind were sunk too deeply in sin to be reclaimed to the love of God, unless He had first felt towards them the yearnings of mercy, and devised a plan by which their sins and their stubbornness might be subdued. That such is the true import of the passage, we ascertain from the scope of the chapter to which it belongs. In the 9th verse, the apostle says, that "God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." Here the fact stated is, that Christ has come into the world; and the consequence of it is that we may now live, whereas, if he had *not* come, we must have perished. A little further along it is added, that "we love God, because He first loved

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loved us." Here the fact stated is that He loved mankind; and the consequence of it is that they may now be brought to cherish a reciprocal affection, whereas, if He had not loved them, and sent to them the provision of a Saviour, they must have remained as they were, with their enmity unsubdued, and their impenitence unawakened.

Thus you see for yourselves the meaning of the text. We shall aim, upon what the apostle has affirmed, to raise two points: the first, that if any of us have really the love of God, we are indebted for it to His mercy in sending us *a Redeemer;* the second, that besides *our* veneration in general for the attributes of God, we must love Him, as He is made known *through a Redeemer* in the Gospel. As to the first point, when I speak about "really" having the love of God, I mean to exclude the feeling of gratitude entirely from the appellation. Gratitude is one thing, and affection another thing. They are based upon different principles; the one on the mere reception of favor, the other on the consideration of merit. Gratitude, sensibility to kindness, is perhaps the last virtue, if it be a virtue, which deserts human nature, even in its lowest debasement. It keeps a lingering hold upon our hearts, when they have bidden farewell to nearly every other sympathy, and every other kindly emotion; and experience has shown, that among the most abandoned of malefactors, there is uniformly some softened part which gives way at the approach of tenderness. But surely a feeling like this, the companion of the darkest bosom, will not be trumpeted into identity with the breathings of a warm and confiding attachment! By no means. It is altogether a different impulse. To the man who lends me his relief in the hour of misfortune, I may tender the return of the most grateful acknowledgment, and yet, when the single attribute of his benevolence is taken from him, I may look upon the whole of what is left of his character with positive disgust.

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The entire emotion in me is but a kind of qualified and embellished selfishness, and nothing pertains to it which can claim the dignified rank of a pure and lofty affection. By "really" having the love of God, I mean the looking upon Him with satisfaction—the thinking of Him with delight, aside completely from an estimate of the favors which we have received from His bounty. In every heart there is some ruling passion, and what I say is, that in *our* hearts that passion should be a paramount cordiality, and a spontaneous gladsomeness in contemplating the character of God, without giving to Him at all the aspect of our personal benefactor. This is precisely the principle which holds dominion over a Christian's bosom, and I repeat, that he is indebted for it to the Divine mercy in providing a Redeemer. Christ Jesus came into the world to save us, not *in* our sins, but *from* our sins—to reconcile, not God to man, but man to God. He saw us fixed in the attitude of a most unbending defiance towards the Almighty, and he aimed to soften our obduracy, and bring us back to our deserted allegiance. Some there are, I know, who suppose the process of becoming the friends of God to rest entirely on their own exertions, and who, as they have never tried in earnest to dislodge the corruptions of the heart, so have not yet learned that it must be God who worketh in them both to will and to do of His own good pleasure. But surely every Christian will bear me witness, and their evidence alone it is which the nature of the case admits of, that the depravity of an unregenerated bosom does not, and will not, give way, unless all the urgencies of the Holy Spirit are matched against it —that the carnal mind is to so deadly an extent "enmity against God," that, until Divine grace interferes, every attempt we make to subdue it is futile, and serves only to show us more and more forcibly the distance of our moral alienation. If this be true, and true it is upon every fair

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and legitimate testimony, if we ourselves be helpless, where should we have been but for Jesus Christ? If the work of giving us an affection for God result, as we all confess it does, solely from the mercy of God, was not the apostle right in saying that we love Him because He first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins? Then our first point is established, and the second remains: that as God has made Himself known through a Redeemer, in that character must we love Him. It is altogether useless to set before the imagination a being invested merely with natural perfections, and to make him the object of our worship. Such an one may be the God of reason, or the God of poetry, or the God of an admiring philosophy, but he is not the God of the Bible. There are those who will talk with eloquence about the great or the magnificent attributes of the Almighty, and yet, come to remind them of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and they find the charm at once dispelled.

They look with a sort of rapture upon the splendors of creation, or the scenery of external nature, or even the sublime moralities of the Bible; but there the curtain falls. When they are told that God, in maintaining the dignity of His government, was induced to surrender His Son to the agonies of the Cross, and that even now He can offer salvation only to the contrite and broken-hearted sinner,—when they hear this, the subject throws off all its appendages of grandeur, and sinks down into a tame and unmoving religiousness.

But, my hearers, it is exactly in this character that God must be loved, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in and through him the Father of him that believeth.

We must put away from us every idea of receiving a pardon, or of standing on the ground of acceptance, or of averting the positive sentence of death issued against us,

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except on the terms of a thorough-going repentance. When we have done this, we shall behold the God of the New Testament, and not till then. We shall approach Him as the hater of sin, and the inflexible enemy of the sinner, wherever He meets him, except only at the foot of an atoning Cross. We shall, in short, forget all the natural grandeurs which surround Him, and cling to the single proffer of mercy, and enter completely into that spirit which drew from holy Job the impressive exclamation, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." This is the language in which we are to approach that awful Being who holds in His hands our eternal destinies. We do not, however, imagine that the affection of love is associated with terror. Far from it. We may feel terror; we must feel it when we first seriously step into the presence of the Infinite Jehovah, on the business of our souls, because we invariably carry along with us a load of guilt, without apology or palliation. But when we have caught the hope of pardon, the scene is at once changed. God, indeed, remains clothed with the same fearful perfections as ever; but then we look upon them in a different light. Terror gives way to a confiding and reverential attachment, and those severer attributes of the Deity which once we contemplated with fear, we find to harmonize with all the rest, and to throw over them the chastening influence of a consistent explanation. We see then, without pressing the argument further, that, in this one matter, a Christian's views are essentially distinct from the views of a man of the world. A man of the world loves God because he has shared His bounties, a Christian because he has discovered the beauty of His holiness: a man of the world loves God because His character is majestic and imposing, a Christian because it bears upon it the lustre of punishing

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sin, while it offers mercy to the sinner. In a word, a man of the world loves God because his imagination depicts him in the mere garb of his natural perfections, a Christian because he feels himself guilty and helpless, and finds his heart warming towards that parental and compassionate Being who could stoop to provide a Redeemer for the perishing children of men. And this is the second point I wished to prove.

Now, my hearers, if I were to take the subject we have discussed, and walk through the whole of these pews for its application, I should not meet an individual without some semblance of love to God. There would be one accustomed to admire the works of creation, the loftiness, perhaps, and magnificence of the heavens; and he would pay homage to the Divine power. There would be another familiar with the analysis of Providence, in its protecting and merciful dispensations, and he would pay homage to the Divine goodness. There would be another prepared to go further still, and drop the tear of an honest gratitude over the story of a Saviour's death, and he would pay homage to the Divine compassion. But if either, or if all of these exercises, make up the one thing of Gospel love to God, what, I ask, is the meaning of the apostle in our text? To possess the feelings which I have just recounted, was it necessary that God should first have that love to us which induced Him to send His only begotten Son into the world? Might we not have admired the splendors of creation—might we not have acknowledged the kindness of Providence—might we not have cherished gratitude to a benefactor, without the dreadful expenditure of the blood of Christ upon Calvary's mount? How is it, then, that our love to God is brought about only by His previous love to us in the gift of His Son?

Why, my hearers, the plain and honest truth is this:

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We have within us, by nature, hearts which turn away from the holiness and purity of the Divine character. We do not relish these perfections, nor, by our own power, can we make ourselves to relish them, any more than we can make ourselves to love the bitterness of wormwood. Yet relish them we must, before we cross the threshold of Heaven. They constitute there the only source of enjoyment; and even were we *in* Heaven, with our antipathies along with us, we should be wretched forever. Something then must be done for us, and Jesus Christ has done it. He has expired in our stead, that we might receive the Holy Spirit, to mould our hearts anew, and from enemies to make us the friends of God. This is the reason that His love is the great procuring cause of ours, for, without Him, our hearts would never have surrendered their hostility to the Divine perfections. We should have gone on to the day of death, incased in the panoply of war against the Almighty, unless Christ had "reconciled us unto God in his own body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby." We see, therefore, that if any of us take the standing of the friends of God, it must be through Christ alone. To him we must go, and on him rely. No matter how many noble and lofty conceptions we cherish of the Deity, no matter how cordial be our veneration for His attributes, it is love which carries a sinner to Heaven; and never will it find a home in our hearts unless we seek it at the foot of Calvary, on our knees, and through the merits of that all-sufficient Redeemer which God has sent for the salvation of man. Amen.

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SERMON XXIX.*

"As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law."
Romans, ii., 12.

THE solemn spectacle, my brethren, which this city has been called the past week to witness, is fitted to put us all upon reflection. I do not mean that there are any of us so debased as to need such a warning to keep us from such a crime; but the principle upon which the recent execution was grounded, is one of the most impressive and imposing character. In the judicial act of hurrying two fellow-beings into eternity, we have not been looking on the infliction of revenge—we have not been viewing a sacrifice to the mere excitement of public feeling—we have not been witnessing the fate of persons, too abandoned for reformation. None of this. The one single principle presiding over the necessity and the sternness of so mournful a scene, has been the unbending majesty of law—of law which knows none of the impulses of mercy—which puts away from it every sympathy with the suffering it demands. While, then, the laws of man evince so much severity, suppose we carry our contemplation higher, and look at the similar relation in which all of us stand to the laws of the Godhead. Do not call this, my hearers, an unnatural transition to another subject. It is essentially the *same* subject. If there be any truth in the Bible, "sentence has passed upon all men to condemnation," and surely when sentence has issued, we need not be told that somewhere a law must ex-

* Preached on the Sabbath succeeding the execution of two men for piracy.

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ist; and that it has been violated, and that it has put forth its penalties against the transgressor.

But where is the law which is thus affirmed to lay upon us all, without reserve, the brand of an unsparing condemnation? Here it is, my brethren, within the lids of the Bible. Here is the statute-book of Heaven's king. Hard, indeed, I know it is—to look upon Inspiration in the light of positive law, and to clothe it with the corresponding attributes of sternness and inflexibility. But open the volume and read for yourselves. Does it not lay down a code of intelligible and arbitrary precepts? Is it not armed on every page with penalties and sanctions? Are not we, as subjects, furnished with understanding, and conscience, and free will, which make up a complete obligation to obedience? Then, the Bible is absolutely law, or it is nothing. If it were a mere summons of advice, it would have no precepts. If it aimed only at moral suasion, it would have no penalties. As it is, it constitutes to every intent and purpose, the idea of law in all its severity, and all its requirements, and little as we may think of it in the common concerns of life, it holds over each and every one of us, the exercise of an unyielding and paramount authority. This is the meaning of the text, "As many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law." In other words, upon those who have had the means of knowing the Book of God's Revelation, it will enforce all its penalties, and inflict all its punishments. It will move forward to complete and rigid execution in spite of the ridicule, the neglect, and the complaints of mankind.

Now, putting the subject into this attitude, what I wish is to make upon it two simple, but very important, points: the first, that where the Divine law has been promulgated, every violation of it must be punished;—the second, that all of us have committed such violation, and, therefore, our

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punishment must sooner or later arrive. I am aware, that in urging the claims of the Bible to universal obedience, the argument will be met by the plea of ignorance. That the allegation is true, I do not doubt; for hundreds there are who never look into the Scriptures with any thing like an inquiring eye, from one year to another. But the plea of ignorance where the means of information exist, is absurdity in terms. As well might a slave, on the approach of his master, stop his ears, and squander away month after month, on the pretension that he had heard no orders issued. Whose fault is it, that we are ignorant of the Law of God? Our own—and only our own. If, like the Heathen, we had been left unprovided with the light of Inspiration, the apostle distinctly affirms that a condemnation would have issued, simply upon the abuse of reason and natural conscience. But now, that we have the statute-book put into our hands, by it we shall be judged. It is no matter whether we keep it shut, or whether we put it away from us; that, and that alone, will be the standard in the day of accounts, from which every deviation, ignorant or not, will receive the prescribed and unmitigated punishment. But I am told, that, after all the investigation we bestow upon the Bible, we may differ widely in our interpretations, and what one might call censurable, another with equal honesty would justify. Be it so. It is not my wish at present to limit this remark, as limit it we must, to its proper application. In interpreting the word of God, there may undoubtedly be a great diversity of sentiment, without impairing the least fundamental principle. But suppose, what sometimes happens, that this diversity should extend further,—should call in question the great cardinal points of religion. What then? Are we to plead our own opinions in offset to the letter of Revelation? Apply the reasoning upon the ordinary concerns of mankind. When a law is intelligibly

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declared, and fairly promulgated, who, I ask, is to decide its meaning? Is it to succumb to the convenient interpretation of those at whose vices it is aimed, and for whose restraint it is enacted? Or is the exposition to come from the same authoritative source with the law itself? So in religion—our duties are distinctly marked out. The difficulty of understanding them is engrafted merely on the hostilities of the carnal heart, and no man, who seeks in his closet, and on his knees, that wisdom which is from above, can remain in any serious or fundamental error. But, perhaps, there may be an obstacle lying deeper than either of those I have named. It may be urged, that the Bible does not appear, upon satisfactory evidence, to contain the Law of God, and, therefore, that when honest scruples are cherished of its Divine origin, it cannot be binding. Happily, to this objection we are provided with a conclusive and unanswerable rejoinder. To refuse assent to matters of evident credibility, so far from excusing, has the effect of aggravating. We should think it an unheard-of defence for violating human laws, to plead a disbelief of their authenticity; for to admit the plea, would be to allow us in every indulgence whatever, inasmuch as the same defence might always be put in requisition, no matter what might be the evidence, or what the obligation. At the same views we arrive by consulting the Scriptures. Jerusalem disbelieved in Christ, and the consequence was, not a justification for rejecting his Gospel, but the reproach, and the vengeance of the Godhead upon the hardihood which defied such overwhelming evidence. Chorasin and Bethsaida followed the same track; but, instead of finding in it a shelter for the guilt, we hear them sentenced to a most fearful woe, because the mighty works which had been done in them had failed to bring about their conviction and repentance.

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Look, too, for yourselves, my hearers: Here is the Bible, sealed in blood, confirmed by miracles, clothed in the splendors of demonstration; and if, after all, you choose to doubt whether it be or be not the law of God, where, I inquire, is the fault? Violate it we may, and then, for consistency's sake, call it in question; but all the time it is moving on to a complete accomplishment, and ours is the sin and the misery, if we dare to impeach the many sanctions which it carries along with it. But not only so: there is another point to be made on the text, and that is, we have, one and all, violated the Divine law, and are, consequently, exposed to its threatened punishment.

Perhaps no man in his senses will deny that he is a sinner; and the very idea of sin implies the displeasure of God, for a God who did not hate sin—in other words, who would put it on a level with holiness—would plainly be no God at all. The great thing, however, to believe and to feel, is, that our sins must absolutely and inevitably be punished as they deserve; and such is evidently the fact, unless they be robbed of their enormity by some counteractive palliation. Is this palliation to be found? We are informed that the infirmities of our nature are ascribable to those passions which God has implanted in us, and, therefore, will be looked upon with forbearance. But why is it, my brethren, that we approach the tribunal of Heaven with a set of excuses which are never admitted before the loosest tribunal of earth? Where was ever a criminal who had not passion to plead for his excesses? There is not a larceny, a piracy, a murder, which, on such reasoning, would retain the slightest tinge of guilt, or the slightest exposure to justice. Go into the sacred Scriptures. When you read that Ahab slew Naboth, do you find his crime palliated because he longed for his unfortunate neighbor's vineyard? When you hear of Annanias and Sapphira giving in a false

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schedule of their estate, do you see them justified because they had a very natural attachment to their property? No. To urge the impulse of passion in extenuation of sin, is pleading the very circumstance which gives to it all its enormity and all its aggravation.

But we are told that the law of God exacts an obedience which the sinner is unable to yield. And how came he unable? Why, his heart, his disposition, in short, his sins, make him do so. And is this to exculpate him? Would a servant be released with impunity from labor because he chose to cut off his hands? A singular sense, indeed, of inability—that we can, every day, break the Divine law, but have no power to abstain from breaking, or, which is the same thing, to keep it! You may think, my hearers, that this excuse is never urged, but you mistake the matter—it *is* urged; and if we have never resorted to it ourselves, it is because we have never yet been serious enough. I well remember that, among those unfortunate men recently condemned to death in this city, there was not one who felt the least concern for his soul, but met the exhortation to repentance by pleading his inability. And put us in the same situation. Let the eternal world come home to us in all its nearness and all its solemnity, and the moment we start upon the work of preparation, we shall find within us hearts that will not bend till the Almighty grace of God is put forth to subdue their reluctance, and melt their obduracy.

But a hope still more relied upon by the sinner, in regard to the penalties of the Divine law, is drawn from the goodness of the Supreme Being. It is often alleged, on what authority I know not, that God is too merciful to condemn so many of his creatures as must suffer if the letter of his word should be enforced. But, my hearers, if this be true, we are supposing God to be not only not just enough to punish sin, but not consistent enough to do as

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He has said. Why is it that we hear nothing of such a mercy on the pages of the Bible? Was it not there that so benevolent a design, if, indeed, it existed, ought to have been found?—and if it be *not* found there, what reason have we to harbor the visionary and presumptuous expectation? Again I refer you to the Bible: Was God too merciful to pour over the world the ravages of the deluge?—was He too merciful to encircle devoted Sodom in flames? But, aside from such cases, was He too merciful to hurl the deluded angels who fell, from the realms of glory to the abodes of unceasing and unmitigated despair? Then He is not too merciful to wreak upon apostate man the vengeance of His violated law. If he can punish *one* sin, why should He not punish all? How, indeed, can He consistently avoid it? If, then, we have a single unpardoned transgression lying at our doors, we may rest assured that a righteous God has in store for it, sooner or later, the penalty affixed to it on the pages of Inspiration.

And this is what I wished to prove.

Now, my brethren, if I were to dismiss the subject here, what a dismal cloud would hang over our relations to the Godhead! Before the majesty of His inflexible law we should stand guilty—condemned—with nothing to say why the appalling sentence should not be executed. But in this state of desertion and abandonment, the Gospel of Christ comes forward and offers us a Saviour; it tells us of the Son of God, who has died on the cross to reconcile the exercise of mercy with the preservation of justice. It shows us the great High Priest who has suffered in our stead—a prince for his people, a father for his children, a God for his creatures. He has magnified the law, and made it honorable on the one hand; he has thrown open, on the other, the dungeons of a perishing world, and lifted, through their dark and dreary cells, the thundering acclamations of mercy. Ah! could

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those ill-fated men, whom lately we saw expire on the gallows—could they, while marching out to the scene of death, have heard that a substitute was provided—could some one have approached them to strike off their fetters and bid them return once more to the life they had forfeited—what a transport of joy would have thrilled through their throbbing hearts! But all this, and more than this, has been done for the sinner. For him has Calvary been steeped in blood; for him has Jesus Christ himself gone to execution; and hardly do we see in return the decency of ordinary gratitude. And yet what is the most disgraceful and terrific death of the body compared with the death of the soul? What are the chains, the coffin, the soldiery, the fatal cord, the last signal, the choked and struggling breath, the strained and glazed eye, the convulsed and blackened features—what are these things to that withering sentence, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire!"

Blessed be God, my hearers, I can tell you again that pardon may be found. A Saviour has paid the price of your ransom, and all things are ready. But remember that now is the accepted time—to-day is the day of salvation. If you postpone this hour, you may be in eternity the next. And when we have passed, unpardoned, the brink of the grave, there remaineth no more hope: the violated law of an incensed and holy God will take its course, and pour upon us the unrelenting severity of its most awful and most aggravated condemnation.

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SERMON XXX.*

"He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night?"
Isaiah, xxi., 11.

You will recollect, my hearers, that Seir was a mountain near the southern frontier of the land of Palestine. In that quarter, as the allusion of our text denotes, it was employed for a post of military observation. The people of Israel were frequently annoyed by the incursions of their unfriendly neighbors in the south, till at last they resorted, when apprehensive of attack, to the expedient of throwing an army at once upon Mount Seir. The object was plain. From such an eminence, the whole of the circumjacent country might be overlooked. While, therefore, the troops were spread in the attitude of preparation along its base, the summit was covered with sentinels, to whom the leader of the forces is supposed, at proper intervals, to have addressed the inquiry I have read to you, "*Watchman, what of the night?*" Now, my brethren, we must be blind to the plainest lines of analogy, not to see that the import of our text is by no means restricted to the land of Palestine. None of us can doubt that the phraseology carries along with it an application directly and unequivocally religious. None of us can forget that Mount Zion is the Church of the living God; and that His ministers are the sentinels stationed upon it; and that they are honestly to answer, whenever the Saviour calls, What is the state of Christianity?—what are the spiritual signs of the times? All this is so clearly denoted by the words of the prophet, that the labor of argument would be useless.

* Preached on the first anniversary of the opening of his church.

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But perhaps another question may come up, for which, at first sight, an answer does not so readily appear; and that is, why the language of the text is more appropriate to-day, than it would be upon any other occasion? Why now, more than at any ordinary period, is the minister of this particular congregation saluted with the call of the Saviour, "Watchman, what of the night?" I will tell you the reason, my hearers, and I trust you will not think it far-fetched or ideal. This is the anniversary Sabbath of our infant Church. A year has winged its flight, since first we assembled here for worship—a year, too, chequered with some of the heaviest visitations of God, and some of the most impressive and alarming motives to a preparation for eternity. Laying them, however, entirely aside, one thing is certain: it has been a year teeming to all of us with the offers, the persuasions, the urgencies of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Since these doors were first opened, who can say that he has not heard the voice of a Saviour's welcome—who that he has not been told of the magnificent provisions of Calvary—who that he has ever poured out before God the tears of an unregarded or an unavailing penitence—who, in short, can say, that he has seen for a single hour the glittering sword of the cherubim guarding the way of life, and repelling the approach of the broken-hearted sinner for pardon? *Not one.* The judge of quick and dead is our witness—*not one!* Rich and poor, bond and free, the disciple of fashion, and the tenant of obscurity—all have shared in the same proposals of mercy—all have listened alike to the news of God's salvation—and what has been the result? This is the point now to be settled. As a watchman upon the walls of Jerusalem, I am called upon to render to Jesus Christ an account of the year we have closed; and while I do so, I appeal to your consciences, in simplicity and godly sincerity, for the truth of my message as I go along.

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In the first place, I am solemnly bound to testify, that among the little band of the Saviour's professed disciples, the past year has witnessed a most affecting inactivity and stupor. The Church has seemed, almost without exception, like a body whose extremities were visibly alive, while the blood was cold and curdled, and the heart quivering in its last pulsations. When I reflect, my brethren, that some of us have taken our seats around the sacramental table,—when I remember that the vows of the heart-searching God are upon our souls, and the eyes of an expecting world upon our movements,—I tremble at the responsibility with which we are travelling on to the judgment-seat of Christ. I involuntarily ask, with the apostle Peter, "What sort of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?" But I must speak the truth. We have all been slumbering at our posts. Have we ever felt that activity of devotion, that zeal for the souls of our fellow-men, which we ought to carry with us into every relation of life? Alas! we know too well the answer which the recording angel has registered in Heaven. Go to the family altar, and what testimony do we find there? Consult the solitude of the closet, and how has our secret religion been coming on? What means it, too, that our prayer-meetings have been attended by numbers so discouraging to those who *were* present, and so upbraiding to those who were *not?* Surely, if the venerable exile of Patmos were once more to revisit our world, he would speak to us as he did to the Church of Sardis, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name to live, and art dead;" and to this might be added, as it then was the declaration of Christ himself, "If thou shalt not watch, I will" verily "come upon thee as a thief in the night," and "thou shalt not know the hour" of thy terrible visitation.

But I have it to say, in the second place, that parched and thirsty as the hill of Zion has been, we have seen a few

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—a very few, who, during the past year, have taken upon them the badge of visible Christianity. They have ventured to that table, so solemn in its import, and so imperative in its obligations, and received from it the symbols of crucifixion and blood. But how small has their number been?—scarcely enough to fill the seats of their departed companions who have fallen in the sweep of the pestilence, and whose corpses, insensible to the recollections, which this anniversary recals, are resting in the cold and silent house appointed for all living! And is it so, then, my brethren, that through the little cluster of the people of God, death cuts down in his annual havoc as many, or nearly so, as Divine grace supplies by the power of its renovation? Is it so, that the sepulchre is matched against the Gospel in competition for numbers—the one for votaries, and the other for victims; the one aiming to lay our heads in the dust, and the other to train us to the hopes of a Christian immortality? Yes—this is the literal arithmetic of fact: eight of our communicants fell in the last summer's desolation, and only nine have yet appeared to fill their places in the Church. Did I say *only!* O, if I know a feeling within me, I thank my God even for nine. But when I look through the pews where you are sitting, and see so many for whom the lashed and lacerated Saviour expired, that melancholy number nine strikes like a funeral knell upon my heart. I am constrained to ask, Are these all who are moving forward on the road to eternity? Are these all who bedew the tomb of Jesus with their tears, and return him their gratitude for his mercy? Are these all who feel the meltings of repentance, when the dying groans of Calvary break upon the ear?

But I must proceed. The Son of God still presses the inquiry, "Watchman, what of the night?" and I am, therefore, to hand in another testimony, in the third place, that many whose sensibilities during the past year have been touched,

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whose consciences have been awakened, have relapsed again into the stupidity of sin.

My hearers, I wish not to pry into the secrecies of your private experience; but sure I am that some of you have felt, more than you now do, the solemn, the overwhelming necessity of personal religion. Merciful God! how should it be otherwise? You, who are carrying about with you immortal souls—you, who are walking on the washed and wasted isthmus of time, unprovided with a hope for eternity—you, who have read the Bible, and listened to sermons, and stood by the beds of the dying, and the graves of the dead,—how should you not have felt the solemnity of your perilous situation? How should you not have shuddered to the very core of the heart, when God has spared you a little longer, and a little longer, up to this hour, and you, in return for His mercy, have forgotten your fears, and broken your promises, and rushed forward with new hardihood on the horrible highway of death? Say not that I am dealing in the language of fancy. If there be truth in Heaven, it is no fancy;—some of you know it is not;—some of you could point back to the hour when you wept bitterly over your sins, when you saw the precipice on which you were trembling, and sought the relief of secret prayer, and were almost persuaded to be Christians! And where are you now? Halt, I beseech you, for one moment, and ask how the case *now* stands between God and your souls! Have you returned to the beggarly elements of the world? Are your anxieties dismissed, and your tears dried? After all that Christ Jesus has done for you, shall he wind up the terrific drama, by thundering in your ears, "Ephraim is joined to his idols,—let him alone?" But there are many, no doubt, who have never known these convictions; for I can testify, in the fourth place, that a large number of this congregation have gone through the past year apparently with

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no feeling about religion, except a most obdurate and inflexible indifference. We may approach them, indeed, with the arguments of Christianity, and they assent,—or with its convenience, and they perceive,—or with its ethics, and they admire; and thus far they will give us the hand of their cordiality. But the moment any thing like experimental piety is brought up, they demur at once, and not only demur, but absolutely put away from them the whole religiousness of the Bible, with all that is binding in its authority, and all that is personal in its application.

My hearers, I know not how to assail this sultry composure of impenitence, for I know not from what it springs. Do you imagine that the preacher rises in the sanctuary to amuse or to excite you? Do you look upon Inspiration as a mere picture of morals, over which he throws the coloring or drapery which may chance to suit the style of his rhetoric? If not, what is the reason that doctrines, which, if true, might almost move a heart of adamant to excitement, are heard day after day with so little emotion? Surely, if an angel were to light upon our earth, he would suppose, of some of us, that we expected Christ Jesus to appear incarnate, and walk through our streets. He would say that we were waiting for the crimsoned and agonizing scenes of Calvary to be acted over again for our redemption. In fact, I have sometimes thought myself, that there are those among us who never will feel the urgencies of religion, till the Son of Man *does* appear in the splendors of the judgment; and if at other times I have a better hope, it is not because I rely on any human instrumentalities, but simply and entirely because "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

Now, my hearers, what, upon the whole, is the substance of the message which the great Captain of Salvation has received to-day from this part of Mount Zion? Is it not true—and if true, is it not most solemn and alarming? Is

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it not calculated to throw us, one and all, upon our knees, before God, for the outpouring of His Spirit, and the visitations of His grace? I know, indeed, there are some feelings which this anniversary brings along with it of a gladsome kind. We cannot forget that Providence has shed over our infant Church the smiles of a protecting patronage. We cannot repress our recollections of the distinguished liberality which has reared this house of our worship. But when we go further—when we leave the generosities of the congregation, and take a census of the real disciples of Christ, the heart sickens and sinks.

There is an incident, my hearers, related of the apostle John, which I have often thought of when standing in this desk.* We are told, that upon one of his missionary excursions in the decline of life, he became strongly attached to a youth of very rare accomplishments. As might be supposed, he pressed upon him the doctrines of the Gospel, till at last his efforts were crowned with seeming success. The young man was baptised, entered the communion of the Church, and lived for some time as a Christian; but, at length, seduced by bad examples, he dropped all his religious pretensions, and went on from step to step, till he was chosen the leader of a band of robbers. When St. John passed that way again, he learned the catastrophe of his favorite, and was pointed to a neighboring mountain where he was said to harbor. Thither the aged apostle hurried, and, having been seized by some of the band, requested to be led to their captain. The moment the young man saw him, he attempted to make off, but the apostle called after him, and persuaded him to stop. The robber stood still, and trembled, and hid his convulsed face in his hands, and sobbed aloud, till, finally, the venerable saint, by his prayers and tears,

* See McChord's Last Appeal, p. 185.

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prevailed upon him to return to the fold of a deserted Saviour.

And, my brethren, are there not many here who bear a resemblance to that youthful delinquent? Are there not many the children of baptism and prayer, who have been nursed in the arms of piety, and trained to the observances of religion, and yet are now wandering in cheerless exile from the Church of Christ?

Everywhere, indeed, I see the embellishments of visible morality, but I look in vain for the anxious eye, the throbbing bosom, the inquiring tongue, to betoken the pursuit of experimental godliness. In vain have you heard the story of the Cross. In vain has the friend of sinners thrown open the kingdom of Heaven, and hung out to you the signals of encouragement and invitation. Yet, all of you, or nearly all, have been taught to remember your Creator in the days of your youth; and though I cannot speak to you with the reclaiming pathos of the ancient disciple, I *can* say, you still have the offer of pardon. I can say, that even while you are a great way off, you have a Father in Heaven who is willing to run and fall upon your necks and welcome you back to the ranks of a rejoicing family. Come, then, for all things are now ready. Come and make your peace with God, and set about the business of eternity. Come and drink of the waters of life, and when next the Son of Man shall inquire, "Watchman, what of the night?" O let the answer ring through the celestial world, that the morning has appeared,—that the day has dawned, and the day-spring, from on high, has visited us with the light and the glory of salvation.

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SERMON XXXI.*

"The righteous hath hope in his death."
Proverbs, xiv., 32.

NEXT to the salvation of men, the loftiest aim of Christianity is to strip the grave of its terrors. This is exclusively her work. She has performed it unaided. It is an achievement peculiarly her own; and while we approach, once more, the table she has spread before us, I know of no subject better calculated to awaken in us a gratitude befitting the solemnities of the occasion. The truth is, whether we are, or are not, the children of God, we must die. With that point religion has nothing to do; but it has much to do with the *manner* of dying. It lends to the followers of Christ a triumph which is found nowhere else; they, like the rest of the world, are walking down to the sepulchre, but, unlike the rest of the world, they carry with them the promise of our text, to cheer them as they go along, and to shed over their path the light of its encouragement and consolation. Aside, therefore, from any further reason, the subject of death accords impressively with the design of a Communion Sabbath. But we have another inducement for selecting it, which you can easily divine. One of our number, who looked forward with joy to this day, has bidden us farewell; and in her place, we see only the badges of mourning. How solemn, my hearers, is the dispensation! How loud and alarming is the voice which issues from her vacated seat, "Be ye also ready!" *Alarming*, did I say? Why should it alarm you, to exchange a vale of tears for the welcoming bosom of a Savi-

* Preached on Communion Sabbath, after the death of Mrs. Brand.

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our? No: unbelief may startle—impenitence may be dismayed,—but the child of God can survey the grave with a countenance unchanged. He can look upon the closing eye—the shivering pulse—the sinking head—the sepulchral hearse—the heavy clod. He can view them with composure; for Christianity tramples all these chilly images under her feet, and invigorates the misgivings of nature with the triumphant assurance of the Gospel, "The righteous hath hope in his death."

But what is meant by the declaration, that the righteous *hath hope in his death?* Beyond the grave, my hearers, all is a dark unknown. It is the land of silence. No traveller returns to tell us what he has seen, what he has heard, or upon what state of being he has been ushered. This mysterious uncertainty throws over *all of us* a feeling of suspense and fear; but when *an impenitent sinner* walks down to the tomb, you can imagine the forebodings which must bear him company. He knows that he is guilty. He feels himself unpardoned. He sees the tribunal of a holy God before him, and no Saviour, no Saviour to stand by him in the moment of launching upon his final destiny. O, what must be his emotions? Now, it is an exemption from these terrors which is guaranteed by our text, to the children of God. The promise is, that every real Christian shall enjoy the presence of Christ in his dying hour; that he shall find the fear of the grave retiring before him the nearer he approaches its brink, and be enabled to triumph over all its horrors. And, my hearers, we might presume beforehand that this would be the case. Is it probable, that Christ should cheer his disciples through life, with his promises, and receive them beyond it to his glory, and yet, leave the dreary interval—the hour of exchanging worlds, unvisited and unblessed with his consolations? Is it likely that, at the very moment when most they needed his presence—while

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the most agonizing conflict, the struggle with the last enemy, was coming on—that then they should be left deserted and disconsolate, when even the self-possession of nature is prostrated, and the prop of constitutional firmness is torn away from under them? No;—that Saviour who pitieth the infirmities of his children in the trials of time, cannot, and will not, forsake them when crossing the threshold of eternity. But we have better evidence than presumptive. The word of God lends to us its plain and unequivocal confirmation. What means David when he exclaims, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"? What means the prophet, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, for I am God and not man"? What means the apostle, "The sting of death is sin—but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ"? Search the Bible through, my hearers, and you arrive at the same result; you find a general promise issued without reserve to the followers of Christ, and comporting entirely with the sentiment of our text.

But, if you still demur, go further, and consult the language of fact. I have never known, and after much inquiry, I have never learnt, a single instance of a person dying without some token of triumph, if he had strength to give it, who had lived an experimental disciple of Christ. The reverse of the position I do not assert. I do not say that every one who expires with composure, must, of course, be a Christian; but I do say, that, as far as I am informed, no sincere and broken-hearted child of God has ever bidden farewell to the world in tears, unless they were tears of joy and consolation. Often, very often, have the hardihood of impenitence and the confidence of formality been dismayed at the door of the sepulchre; but never yet has been

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heard there the voice of consternation or terror from Christian lips. And, my hearers, this is a doctrine of no trifling importance. When we come to stand on the last half hour of life, we shall find it anything but a trifle. Talk as we may, we shall need some mighty sustaining principle to hold us up in the day when God taketh away the soul; and to banish from us the timidities and the apprehensions of nature. In vain will reason whisper her sophistry in our ears: in vain will philosophy rear around us the shelter of her delusions. Nothing can calm a sinner on the breaking brink of eternity, but an All-sufficient Saviour to take him by the hand—to wipe the tear from his cheek, and the sweat from his forehead, and to annihilate the view of the grave by the loftier view of the glory and the blessedness beyond it. And who, my hearers, are meant by the righteous? The appellation cannot denote those who have never sinned, for "we have *all* sinned and come short of the glory of God."

With the history of human guilt you are familiar. You know, without leaving the secrecy of your own bosoms, that there is none who inwardly doeth good—no, not one. Hope, then, if hope there be, must fix upon the offer of pardon. The criminal lies at the mercy of his judge, and the single inquiry comes up, whether mercy can and will be exercised? Here, too, you know the mighty discovery which Inspiration lays open. You have heard of a provided Saviour, and what I say is, that in and through him alone, can a sinner aspire to righteousness in the eye of Heaven. But let me ask if you wish to sustain this relation towards the Godhead? Then, on the threshold, I call upon you to *repent*. It is the first step to salvation. Without it you may lie down at once in helplessness and despair. Except ye repent, ye shall perish. Look back on your long and dreary course of alienation from God; on your unbending hardi-

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hood in making light of His Christ; on the ten thousand instances in which you have trifled with the obligations of mercies, the warning of judgments, the urgency of sermons, the solemnity of sacraments, the admonition of sickness and death. Look back upon these things and mourn. Let the sobbings of contrition break out from your hard and unfeeling hearts. Let your closets find you on your knees, and reverberate with the agonizing voice of your supplications, "God be merciful to us sinners." But this is not all. Repentance will not make you righteous, for the righteousness of God is by faith. You must believe in Christ Jesus. Do not mistake my meaning. I have no reference to the mere assent of an understanding besieged by evidence which it cannot resist. If that were the principle of salvation, it would depopulate the caverns of woe; for not one is there —not one ever will be, who does not in such a sense believe. You are required to *confide* in the Redeemer—to put your *trust* in him. Your moralities, your good deeds, and even your penitential tears, must be alike disclaimed and discarded at the foot of the Cross. You must depend upon Christ, not because he is *a* Saviour, but because you have made him *your* Saviour in the way of his appointments. Here you are secure. As an evidence that you are righteous, I ask no more than this; but, as an evidence that this is done, I go on to demand, by the authority of the Bible, that you live religious from day to day, in all holy conversation and godliness. What doth it profit if a man say he hath faith, and have not works? When you have surrendered the indulgencies of the world—when you get to disrelish the least vestige of sin—when you find yourselves refreshed on the road to eternity by frequent prayer—when you heartily love the spirituality of God's people—when, in short, you feel that even Heaven without your God would be no Heaven to you,—then, and not till then, can you hope

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that you have repented and believed to the saving of the soul.

These things, therefore, put together, make up the specific character which Inspiration pronounces righteous. Depend upon it, my hearers, nothing else will pass the test of the judgment-seat—nothing else will confer immortality on a sinner. It is no matter how many visible accomplishments we put on. They may furnish us a passport to the confidence and esteem of our fellow-men, but never will they decoy the scrutiny of the heart-searching God. Over all our deportment, however lofty, and all our virtues, however resplendent, and all our feelings, however glowing, there must preside the one great principle of real religiousness, or the whole is only a magnificent superstructure reared upon sand. The thunders of the final day will rock it to atoms.

In dismissing our subject, my Christian friends, we are again reminded, as in beginning it, of one who longed to see this day, but saw it not. She has gone down, with the hope of the righteous, to the dead. Think not that I aim at the language of eulogy. No: much and tenderly as she was loved, an assembly of sinners is not the place for panegyric; and could she speak to us from on high, she would repress the voice of praise and the tear of regret, and tell us only to gird up our loins and keep our lamps trimmed and burning. Methinks she would say, if she could revisit this house of prayer and resume her seat at the table which once she prized so highly, she would look around upon the little band of her surviving companions, and say, with affectionate solemnity, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel!" Listen, then, beloved brethren, to the admonitions of the grave. Be up and doing, for the time is short. You are treading in the footsteps of your departed friend. When another communion shall have come round, some of you who now hear me may be missing forever. But what have you to

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fear? If Christ be formed within you the hope of glory, you may go on your way rejoicing. True, you must die; and you know not how soon or how suddenly; but your Saviour is sitting at the helm of the universe, and you may confide in him. He will bear you forward through the anguish of disease, and irradiate your expiring hour with the light of a promised immortality. Yes, more: He will watch over your slumbering dust, and present you before the throne of the Father, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. He will open to you the portals of Heaven, and wipe all tears from your eyes, and raise from your golden harps the sublime and triumphant anthem—Worthy is the lamb that was slain, through an endless eternity. O! who that thinks of this would not be a Christian? Who can look at the majestic and animating scene, and not exclaim, with the ancient prophet, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

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SERMON XXXII.

"They are a nation void of knowledge, neither is there any understanding in them.

"O, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end."

Deut., xxxii., 28, 29.

THIS is the language of Moses, the illustrious legislator of antiquity. It composes a part of his valedictory address to the people of Israel, after conducting them to the frontiers of the promised land. The whole transaction took place a few hours previous to his death, and carries about it the solemnity which an expectation of such an event would be likely to inspire. Just before resigning his command to Joshua, he assembled the weeping pilgrims who had forty years been conducted by his care in their travels, and breathed to them his last and most impressive exhortation, to which our text belongs.

Mark, my hearers, the fidelity of this venerable saint. He tells the Israelites all the enormity and all the ingratitude of their sins. Then mark his affection. He pours out a devout aspiration to God, that they might be reclaimed to a saving penitence. Such, and such only, is the way in which a herald of the Divine mercy can testify a real attachment to those who sit under the droppings of his ministrations. Now, having read two verses for your meditation to-day, we shall offer a single explanatory remark upon each, and then proceed to the subject which they were meant to introduce.

The *first* verse runs, "They are a nation void of knowledge, neither is there any understanding in them." This phraseology is far from retaining its original import. In the Hebrew, the idea conveyed is that they are morally insane

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—that they have a disorder at heart analogous to mental derangement. As to the second verse, the proper translation appears to be: O, that they were wise; then they would understand this; then they would consider their latter end; —and the expression of understanding *this*, refers back to the charge of moral insanity, which sinners, untaught by the light of God's spirit, are unable suitably to comprehend. If, therefore, the language of Moses were paraphrased into a single sentence, we should read, "O, that the impenitent had true wisdom; then would they know the fatal distemper which is seated in their hearts; then would they begin in earnest the work of preparation for death and eternity." Let this be assumed as the sense of the passage.

The inquiry which, on the threshold, comes most prominently up, is, What is that wisdom on which such consequences are said to depend? Do not suppose I mean to answer this question in conformity alone to my own views. Do not imagine that I will repeat to you the word repentance, or religion, or Christianity, as if either of them made up of course the attribute about which we are inquiring. No; let us go fairly and logically to work. We will follow a course of reflection which no one can object to, and, lead where it may, we will go along with it, and abide the issue. In the outset, then, that wisdom is plainly the safest, which derives its origin from the safest source. Collect the most profound plans which human ingenuity ever devised, and you see them baffled every day. Not all of them together can ensure happiness. The intellect of man is at best but feeble, and its proudest achievements are often grounded in error. But where is the remedy? Why, if the infinite God has proclaimed a system of designs for our happiness, *there* is a remedy. *There* is something which can be looked upon without a feeling of distrust. Whatever it proposes is secure: we may lean upon it with confidence, for the most

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obvious and consoling of all reasons in the world, because the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Again: That wisdom is confessedly the best, which has the best object in view. What is the amount of all those projects which a common consent has put in motion for the benefit of mankind? It is simply this: To be happy we must launch out into sensual indulgence; to be honorable, we must keep a pistol or a poignard; to be good, we must be no worse than others. Is there any cure for such an evil? If there be, let us bid it welcome. Here is a book, bestowed by the inspiration of the Almighty, which offers to lay the axe at the root of the tree; which aims, by cleansing the leprosy of our hearts, to correct the excesses of our sins, and to restore to the desolated bosom of man the pure and purifying image of his Maker.

Again: That wisdom is evidently the noblest, which brings about the noblest results. Admitting, then, that we pass over the whole range of human invention, we arrive only at enjoyments of an inferior kind. The splendors of wealth—the refinements of luxury—the laurels of applause—this is what the world confers on its favorite votaries, and only on them, for the great mass of men are strangers even to this. Revelation opens, beyond the trifles of sublunary temptation, a higher destiny. It stretches forth the hand of mercy to save our souls; and just so much as the soul surpasses the body in its claim to our anxieties, just so much do the disclosures of Revelation transcend the little schemes of our earthly policy.

Once more: That wisdom is assuredly the most to be prized which is the most lasting in its duration. We may allow the pleasures of the world to be a thousand times greater than they actually are, and yet they dwindle to nothing, when the damping reflection comes in upon us,

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that we can hold them only for a moment. The grave rifles us of all temporal blessings, and that, too, frequently without finding us in the attitude of preparation for the catastrophe. If there be any thing which will last beyond the grave, it is the inheritance which the word of God bestows. That will survive the changes of time. It will outlive the desolations of the universe—it will abide through a never-ending eternity. Housed in an everlasting habitation, the saint will rejoice forever, with no vicissitudes to endanger his happiness, and no reverses to interrupt the triumph and the glory of hereafter.

By this time, then, I presume, my hearers, you are convinced that true wisdom is only another term for the religion of the Bible; and if the considerations I have named to you carry the least weight along with them, I may safely challenge the most inordinate lover of the world to resist the conclusion. But I have not yet done with this branch of the subject. Wisdom, indeed, is religion; but it is not religion in the abstract, nor religion in its external decencies and embellishments, but religion in the detail of its experimental operations. What is it to me, that God has offered mercy to the sinner, if I have never complied with the conditions on which it is dispensed? What is it to me that a Saviour is provided, if I have never made him mine by that personal act which distinguishes the criminal pardoned from the criminal condemned? No: there is a mighty cleansing, which must be put forth upon the heart; there is the process of a deep and serious repentance; there is the business of closing in with the overtures held out to us, and of setting our seals as one of the parties to the transaction—all these things it is which constitute on our part that wisdom which cometh from above. Now, about this high and transforming attribute, we are told in our text, that it produces two results: It makes us "under-

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stand" that great moral distemper of the impenitent heart, to which Moses gives the notion of insanity; and it makes us consider our latter end, and take up the work of preparation. In the first place, it shows us the insanity of the heart in a state of impenitence.

Do not be alarmed at the mention of insanity. It is precisely the idea which the ancient law-giver had in uttering the sentiment before us; and upon every principle of analogy, the application is entirely applicable to that man who lives without God, and without hope in the world. In what consists the evidence of mental derangement? One indication of it is, that the individual possesses the strongest confidence of his own soundness, while others, in their senses, he looks upon as disordered. Apply the test to the ranks of impenitence. Consult the sinner, who is pressing forward to eternity without an interest in Christ, and whatever an affected humility may induce him to acknowledge, the prevailing persuasion which governs him is, that "all is well." The man may think rightly, or reason rightly, or talk rightly; but he feels altogether inconsistently with a becoming sense of his danger and his guilt. He soothes himself with the whisper of "Peace, peace," while every page of the Bible aims a deadly blow at the foundations of his security; and all this time, too, where anything like the fervor of personal religion meets his eye, he regards it as the effect of excitement, or as being righteous overmuch, or, in short, as the exuberance of a heated imagination. "Paul," said the Roman proconsul, "much learning doth make thee mad;" but little did he think that the charge laid against himself, and not against the apostle.

Another symptom of intellectual insanity is the singular fondness it awakens for trifles. If you have ever visited an asylum, where the principle is exemplified, you have seen its wretched inmates busied in the arrangement of

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their favorite straws, or pebbles, or pictures—of every thing, in a word, on which their attention would never have been employed, but for the malady under which they labored; and can you detect no resemblance here to the infatuation of mankind, who engross themselves with the little anxieties of time, while an unprovided eternity is forgotten? Look abroad upon the theatre of human life, and what do you find, but one unceasing struggle for those fleeting toys, which, in an angel's eye, appear as vain and as visionary as the bagatelles of a lunatic, or the play-things of an infant, do to us. But another indication of a deranged mind is, that it is often visited with lucid intervals; and does our analogy stop at this point? Is this a consideration, for which no parallel betrays itself among the votaries of impenitence? Why is it, then, that your cheeks are sometimes bathed in tears while listening to the story of our ingratitude and obduracy? Why do you feel the risings of remorse when reminded of the mighty agony which a dying Saviour endured for your redemption? Why, in some moment of compunctuous visitation, are your stubborn knees bent in your closets, while the supplication groans out from your lips, "God be merciful to us, sinners"? Are not these your lucid intervals? It may be, indeed, that you have never had such seasons. You may have remained callous to the whole subject of religion, and the whole assemblage of motives, which urge upon you the business of eternity;—and if so, the text comes home to you with invigorated emphasis, for certain it is, that the less you have felt yourselves, the more you have proved to others the reality of your *moral alienation*. Well, then, may I repeat the devout aspiration of Moses, "O, that you were wise; then would you understand this; then would you see your impenitence in all the leprosy of its guilt; and your first and highest aim would be, to secure from the great Physician

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of souls the influence of His grace, and the joys of His salvation."

But the wisdom about which we have spoken, produces, in the second place, the result of making us consider our latter end, and take up the work of preparation. When this is done, much is gained. The reason of our remaining at so great a distance from our duty, is not a fixed opposition, but a strange and unaccountable indifference to it. It is neglect more than positive hostility. Cast your eyes over the world. Look, for example, on the disciples of pleasure and fashion. Watch them as they tread, day after day, the giddy round of their propensities. It is not because they are intrenched in a set of principles which authorize their thoughtlessness. Far from it; they know full well, that the occupation of sinners ought to be very different, and if they reflect sufficiently at all, they retain through the whole of their indulgencies the resolution of exchanging them, at some future day, for the pursuits of serious Christianity. But the difficulty is, they find no time for consideration; they press on from one phantom to another, without looking for a moment back upon the ground over which they have passed; and sure I am that nothing would so completely depopulate the gaming-house, the table of revelry, the scene of excess, not to mention places of more decent resort, as for each of their votaries to employ one half-hour of every day in the business of sober meditation upon his course.

But again: Survey the thinking and serious part of community. How comes it, that no more of them are experimental Christians. Not, surely, because they ward off the urgencies of religion by denying its claims to credit? By no means. They believe to the full extent that this is required of them, and they reflect too upon the subject, in all the bearings of its general application. But they over-

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look the personalities of its import. They think, and read, and contemplate for months together, without going at once into the secrecy of their own bosoms, and pronouncing, at the bar of conscience, the declaration of the prophet, "Thou art the man." Here, too, the want of consideration lies at the bottom of the evil, for, although they consider every thing in the gross, they consider nothing in the detail; and thus it was that the apostle, when addressing those who had been familiar from infancy with the doctrines of religion, introduced the significant inquiry, "How shall we escape if we *neglect* so great a salvation?" But once more: Go into the visible Church. You have noticed many, I doubt not, distinguished by the badge of Christianity, who seemingly have little or none of the spirit of Christianity along with it. It is so, beyond a question; but of all who belong to this class, few, very few, have assumed the name of Christians for the sake of expediency, or of profit. They did it, for the most part, under the excitement of serious feelings at the moment; and now it is, that the feelings have worn away, while the profession remains, and with it a show of consistency, which human nature in every situation loves to keep up. Yes; and is there no antidote to this? Undoubtedly, there ought to be; for the work of suitable consideration would impress on every mind the tremendous solemnity of an act so repugnant to the Godhead. But that work is neglected—the heart settles down into stupidity—familiarity with sacred things increases the evil—and among the unworthy members of a Christian communion, there is less of that deep and solemn consideration befitting their condition, than is to be met with among any other class of men in the world. How justly then, my hearers, may the prayer of Moses be reiterated, "O, that you were wise." Then would you consider your latter end. You would halt in the career of infatu-

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ated and unsuspicious impenitence, and put on a becoming preparation for the grave; and not a moment's sleep would be given to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, till you had made the destinies of eternity sure.

Now, my hearers, all these representations of human nature you may carry home to your own consciences. They are sanctioned by the word of God, and I appeal to you if they be not confirmed by every day's experience. You may be surprised to hear that you have about you a disease analogous to insanity. But what better is it, that you wrap yourselves so completely up in the pitiful concerns of a world you must soon surrender? Should you see one of your number rejecting the offer of riches and abundance, and employed in collecting the straws that had chanced to be blown along your streets, would you hesitate in supposing him deranged? I lay the case at your own doors—What in Heaven's eye must be your character, while buried in the trifles of earth, and pushing away from you all the magnificence and glory of God's salvation? Perhaps you may wonder that you are charged with inattention to your latter end. Your moralities and virtues may have thrown over you, in reference to a future life, a feeling of security and confidence. But let me inquire, Have you made Jesus Christ your friend? Have you heard on your knees the whisper of his everlasting mercy to your souls? If not, cast away from you the delusion of your hope. You have something else, and something greater, to do, before you have settled the business of eternity. You must consider the subject in a different light, a light reflected from the mercy of God in Christ, or the whole is a dream, which the morning of the final day will dissolve. Hear the compassion of the Saviour, speaking through the ancient saint, "O, that you were wise." Will you resist this impressive expostulation? Will you close your eyes to your dying hour

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—to the judgment-seat—to a coming eternity,—and urge on the catastrophe which God himself has interposed to avert? "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Why will you sit while the solemnities of the Bible are moving forward to their accomplishment; while the season* of accustomed desolation is approaching, which may lay your heads in the dust. Why will you sit unmoved under the appeals of a Saviour's Gospel? You well know nothing more can be done to save you, than is done. Will you, then, listen to the fatal whisper of, "Peace, peace," when God has said, "There is no peace to the wicked?" Make up your minds. Either bid the mercy of Christ to desert you forever, and leave you to go down to hell, or seize this hour on the offers of pardon; for, "Behold, now is the accepted time, to-day is the day of salvation."

* The annual epidemic at New-Orleans.

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